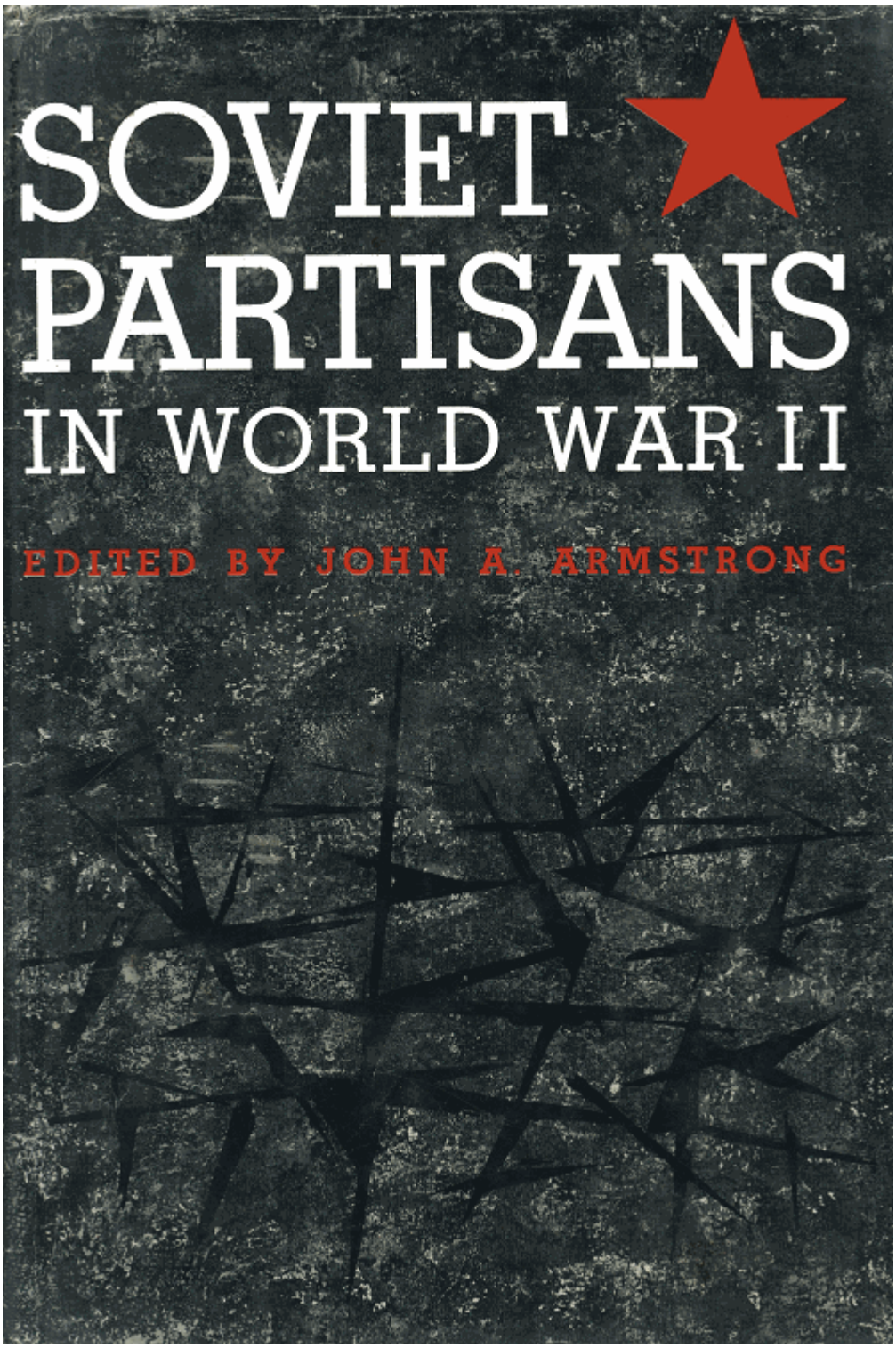

SOVIET PARTISANS IN WORLD WAR II EDITED BY JOHN A. ARMSTRONG WITH A FOREWORD BY PHILIP E. MOSELY MADISON 1964 THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PRESS

Copyright © 1964 by the Regents of The University of Wisconsin

Foreword

Soviet Partisans in World War II is a summation and an extension—both carried out with great talent by Professor John A. Armstrong of the University of Wisconsin—of a postwar program of research into the origins, doctrine, operations, and effectiveness of Soviet irregular warfare. The volume can be read as an original and important contribution to the history of World War II and to the study of the Soviet political system operating under extreme stress. Today, when Soviet policy lays strong emphasis on "wars of national (or people's) liberation" and on Soviet backing for them, these studies likewise provide a fresh examination of the most recent and intensive Soviet experience in the waging of unconventional warfare.

Extreme claims have been made, as Professor Armstrong points out in his Introduction, about the character and military value of the partisan movement in World War II, and official Soviet appraisals have varied widely in the relative importance they ascribe to "spontaneous" and patriotic reactions of the population, to the courage and organizing skill of local Communist Party officials, and to the control and direction exercised from above by the central Party and military authorities. This volume represents the first attempt to clarify these questions through a systematic investigation of a vast amount of first-hand documentation, partly Soviet, mainly German, which was captured at the close of World War II.

After the German invasion of June 1941, which brought a large part of the Soviet population under Hitler's control, had been halted in the heroic defense of Moscow, Leningrad, and Stalingrad (now Volgograd), a long road of suffering and sacrifice stretched out before the invaders could be expelled from Soviet territory. How far did the partisan forces, operating in the rear of Hitler's armies, weaken the German military effort and thus lighten the burden of the Red Army? These studies suggest new and significant answers to this question and also to the question of how the people in occupied areas reacted to the German presence and to the prospective restoration of Soviet rule. It thus presents, as Professor Armstrong points out, a study of "shadow" rule at a distance, in which the partisans served as a reminder of the impending or eventual return of the Soviet system.

Finally, the partisan experience in World War II constitutes the largest single body of Soviet experience in irregular warfare. That experience is embedded in the minds of many Soviet leaders, of high rank and low; many of them, now active in Soviet policy or administration, were closely concerned with the organization and direction of that arm of military and political action. Soviet policy is actively concerned today with the prospect of new wars of "national liberation" which, the leadership asserts, can bring important accretions of strength to the Communist bloc while still holding the risks of general or nuclear war to an acceptable level. The expectations of Soviet policy-makers about actual or prospective partisan wars, as one possible stage in any struggle for "national liberation," are doubtless influenced by past Soviet experiences as well as by current analyses of local factors that may favor or inhibit new revolutionary initiatives in various continents. The factor of doctrinal and psychological continuity therefore makes it useful for students of present-day Soviet policy to examine the experience of the Soviet partisan movement in World War II, even though no firm conclusions can be drawn from it with respect to future Soviet actions.

The studies that form the major part of *Soviet Partisans in World War II* were originally prepared as part of Project Alexander, a research task which was undertaken by the War Documentation Project (A.F. Contract 18[600]-1), under contract with the United States Air Force. The research program was monitored by the Human Resources Research Institute of the Psychological Warfare Division, particularly by Dr. Raymond V. Bowers, Dr. F. W. Williams, and Dr. Charles E. Hutchinson. Special thanks go to these officials and likewise to Major

General James McCormack, Jr., USAF (ret), who was then Director of Research and Development in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Development.

Without the farsighted decision of officers and advisers of the United States Air Force to devote a small fraction of its defense research funds to a systematic investigation of this problem, and to open up the vast body of captured documents for investigation, the study could never have been started, much less brought to successful completion. Great credit is also due to the Chief and staff of the Departmental Records Branch, Advocate General's Office, Department of the Army, who generously provided full cooperation and many facilities indispensable to the work of the project. The work of the project benefited greatly from the advice and support of the Human Resources Research Institute and from the suggestions of an interdepartmental committee consisting of representatives of interested government agencies.

Project Alexander proceeded through several distinct research phases. In a first period of planning and survey, the major research purposes were defined and a voluminous mass of source materials was screened and sifted; a large part of the relevant materials was catalogued in an extensive punch-card filing system. As the investigation proceeded, it drew more and more on the records of corps, divisions, and even regiments, and therefore the process of identifying the contents and research significance of additional bodies of records was continued on a reduced scale throughout the remainder of the three and one-half years of the project.

In the first research phase the documentary raw material was tested by carrying out studies of several major topics within defined chronological and geographical limits. In the second research phase the inquiry widened its focus to embrace a full range of functional subjects, but was held to manageable proportions by limiting the studies to selected geographic areas or individual partisan organizations. Special attention was given to the "classic" partisan areas in western Russia, Belorussia, and northern Ukraine. In the selection of regions for study, the main purpose was to make sure that the case studies would represent a wide diversity of geographic and natural conditions, ethnic composition, social and economic situations, and methods of partisan operations. As a safeguard against excessive concentration on the "classic" areas, two additional studies were made of partisan movements in the central Ukraine and the north Caucasus. In a third research phase the findings of geographical studies were collated and compared to produce a series of functional studies; among them were the role of airpower in partisan warfare, organization and control of the partisan movement, composition and morale of the movement, and partisan psychological warfare among the German-occupied population.

Credit for this difficult and comprehensive research effort belongs first of all to the talented and devoted scholars who constituted the staff of Project Alexander: John A. Armstrong, Alexander Daliin, Kurt DeWitt, Ralph Mavrogordato, Wilhelm Moll, Eric Waldman, Gerhard L. Weinberg, Earl Ziemke. Each of them brought long experience, fresh insights, and great devotion to this task, and it was these qualities that made the effort possible and fruitful.

Fritz T. Epstein served in the first stage as Director of Research; after he was called to other duties, Hans J. Epstein became Director of the Project, and Alexander Dallin served with great talent as Director of Research. Philip E. Mosely, then Director of the Russian Institute, Columbia University, served part-time as senior consultant on research and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the War Documentation Project. The contract was administered through the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, and Dr. Charles Y. Glock, then Director of the Bureau, and his staff did a great deal to facilitate the smooth operation of the project.

From the beginning the scholars engaged in the project and the officers and officials who sought and found modest support for it believed that its findings should eventually be made available to the public, and I take pleasure in expressing, on their behalf, our deep appreciation to the Department of Defense for making this possible. Professor John A. Armstrong, who had been author or co-author of several of the most important studies, then undertook, at a considerable sacrifice to his other research interests, to prepare this volume for publication. Because of the overlapping of the successive research stages, as outlined above, it was necessary to combine and condense the individual studies, in order to eliminate repetition and bring out those findings that are of central significance. Since a good deal of new Soviet information has become available in recent years, it would have been desirable, ideally, to rework all the studies. However, a sampling of the new materials, derived from Soviet official histories and memoirs, made it clear that the new data, in turn, would have to be checked against the original records, at great cost in time and with only slight scholarly gain for the final product. Only minor corrections, apart from condensation, have therefore been made in the studies as completed in 1953 and 1954.

Instead, Professor Armstrong has prepared, in his Introduction, a comprehensive review of the partisan movement, based on a wide range of new Soviet materials, on the Alexander studies, and on his own continuing researches into these problems, parts of which have been published in his *Ukrainian Nationalism* (second edition, 1963), *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite* (1959), and *The Politics of Totalitarianism* (1961). The Introduction serves a dual function: it sums up with masterly sweep and clarity Professor Armstrong's many years of research into the partisan movement and its role in Soviet political strategy; it also sets the background for the more specific studies of the experience and significance of the Soviet partisan movement in World War II and for the selection of original documents in translation. Through his double contribution, as author and editor, to making possible the publication of these studies, John Armstrong has again placed the scholarly community under great debt.

Philip E. Mosely

Editorial Preface

This book is based primarily on a group of studies prepared by the War Documentation Project for the United States Air Force. Since the total length of the studies was far too great for a single printed volume, it was necessary to leave out much of the original material. Three analytic studies of social and political aspects of the Soviet partisan movement in World War II were retained substantially intact as Chapters II, III, and IV. Two analytic studies which dealt with intelligence and air power aspects of partisan warfare now constitute Chapters V and VI. These studies were somewhat condensed to eliminate material of a technical nature which now has only historical interest. Five case studies of special geographical areas of partisan activity are now Chapters VII through XI. All of these studies were considerably shortened to eliminate material which has been summarized in substance in the analytic chapters. In the Appendix of Selected Soviet Sources, 69 of the 125 documents originally translated have been retained; five additional documents formerly appended to individual studies have been added. The documents which were omitted for the most part contain material of a technical nature or material which is essentially similar to that in documents which have been retained. Two special War Documentation Project studies on the partisans have been omitted altogether. The "History of the First Belorussian Partisan Brigade" appeared to have rather limited interest. "The Soviet Partisan Movement in World War II: Summary and Conclusions" has been omitted also, but much of the data presented in this study has been incorporated in Chapter I. Wherever feasible the original source references for specific data of major importance derived from the "Summary and Conclusions" have been indicated in Chapter I. The Selected Bibliography contains a considerable amount of material

appearing in the original, but has been thoroughly revised to eliminate several relatively insignificant items and to incorporate many new items. The Glossary is substantially the same as the original.

In the ten years that have elapsed since the War Documentation Project studies were prepared, many important publications on the partisans have appeared in the Soviet Union. Ideally, one might have preferred to incorporate information from these works in each of the relevant chapters of this book. However, many of the Soviet works—especially those relating to particular geographical areas of partisan activity—are not available outside the USSR. Furthermore, complete revision of the studies included in this book would have been wholly unsatisfactory unless one could have compared the new material to the original German documentary sources; but the great bulk of these are still under security classification. Consequently, a page-by-page revision of the original studies did not appear to be feasible. Instead, the studies (apart from the deletions described above) have been presented very nearly as they were written. The only substantial changes are in such items as personal names, population data, and specific organizational features which have proved to be inaccurate. On the other hand, a great deal of new information from Soviet sources has been incorporated in Chapter I, which was written specifically for the present book. The Soviet material is interesting not only because of the new light it throws on the partisan movement, but because it indicates how a careful reading of published Soviet descriptions tends to corroborate most of the findings derived from the wartime German and Soviet documents.

The arrangement of the materials in this book is designed to facilitate an analytical understanding of the partisan movement rather than to present a chronological history. Consequently, Chapter I presents an interpretation and a summary which, it is hoped, will provide the reader with a general understanding of the subject. Chapters II-VI contain more detailed analyses of specific aspects of the partisan movement, while the case studies in Chapters VII-XI (which constituted the basis for many of the generalizations presented in the earlier chapters) are intensive examinations of all aspects of specific groups of partisans. The Appendix of documents enables the reader to catch at first hand some of the flavor of the partisan movement and, to some extent, to make his own evaluations.

The principal credit for this work, as Philip E. Mosely points out in his Foreword, should go to the devoted research team of the War Documentation Project, and to the many persons in Government agencies and elsewhere who assisted it. I want to add that Dr. Mosely himself played an indispensable part in initiating the Project, supervising its research, and, more recently, in making this book possible. I am especially grateful to him, to Alexander Dallin, and to Gerhard L. Weinberg, for advice on aspects of the editing. At the same time, I want to make clear that 1 am wholly responsible for the entire contents of Chapter I, and for the deletions and minor substantive revisions in the rest of the volume. I only hope that my changes and additions have not seriously distorted the work of the original authors. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the National Security Studies Group of the University of Wisconsin, and its director, Bernard C. Cohen, for financial support for the expensive process of revision.

J.A.A.
August, 1963

Contents

Foreword
Editorial preface
List of figures

I. Introduction *by John A. Armstrong*

§I. The significance of the Soviet partisan experience
The objectives of the antagonists—The relevance of the Soviet partisan experience

§II. Soviet partisan operations as unconventional warfare
The origin and tasks of the partisans—The environment of partisan operations—The partisan response—Antiguerilla warfare—Evaluation

§III. The partisans and the totalitarian system
Maintaining the Soviet presence—Pressure on the peasant—The partisans and the Soviet control apparatus—The extension of the Communist system—The partisans in the postwar USSR

PART I: ANALYTIC STUDIES

II. Organization and control of the partisan movement *by John A. Armstrong and Kurt DeWitt*

§I. Introduction

§II. The first efforts of partisan organization
The prewar Soviet concept of partisan warfare—The territorial organization—The partisan movement and the Red Army—The fate of the territorial partisan organization

§III. Expansion and reorganization of the partisan movement, 1942-44
The revival of the partisan movement, early 1942—The development of the partisan band—The Central Staff—The front staffs—The territorial staffs—The intermediate partisan command structure—Distribution of command functions—Implementation of control in the partisan movement—Summary §IV. Conclusion

III. Composition and morale of the partisan movement *by Earl Ziemke*

§I. Composition of the Soviet partisan movement
Distinctive component groups—Shifts in composition—Nationalities— Age groups

§II. Conditions of partisan life
The size of the movement—Recruitment—Training—Equipment and food supply—The camp—Terrain and climate—Medical services

§III. Group characteristics
Influence of the officers—Influence of the Communist Party—Morale in general—Discipline in general

§IV. Conclusion

IV. Partisan psychological warfare and popular attitudes *by Alexander Dallin, Ralph Mavrogordato, and Wilhelm Moll*

§I. Organization and technical aspects of partisan psychological warfare
Organization of partisan psywar—Technical aspects of partisan printed propaganda

§II. Partisan psychological warfare directed at German personnel
The problem—Direct and verbal propaganda—Nonverbal psychological warfare—Provocation—Treatment of prisoners of war—Conclusion

§III. Partisan psychological welfare directed at Axis troops

§IV. Partisan psychological warfare directed at collaborators
Military—Civilian—Vlasov and the partisans

§V. Partisan propaganda aimed at the local population
Introduction—Targets—Media—Partisan leaflets—Partisan rumors—Partisan psychological warfare

§VI. The partisans as the long arm of the Soviet Regime
Introduction—Local government—Party and Komsomol—Soviets—Judiciary and executive—Anti-Fascist committees—Administrative measures—Home guard—Recruitment—Requisitions—Cash and state loan collections—Agriculture—Summary

§VII. The population between Germans and partisans
First phase of the occupation—Early stage of the partisan movement— Effects of changes in German tactics—Summer 1942 to Fall 1943— 1943-44—Demographic changes under the occupation—Motives behind popular attitudes—Conclusions

V. The partisans in Soviet intelligence *by Kurt DeWitt*

§I. Relations between the partisans and Soviet intelligence

§II. Intelligence assignments of the partisans
Partisan intelligence activities for the Red Army—Political and economic intelligence—Concluding remarks

§III. Intelligence operations of the partisans

VI. AlRPOWER IN PARTISAN WARFARE *by Gerhard L. Weinberg*

§I. The role of airpower in the formation and control of partisan units

§II. Supplies and reinforcements
Military supplies—Food—Clothing

§III. Special aspects of air support
Tactical air support of partisan operations—Limitations imposed by air support—German efforts to counter air support

§IV. Airpower in antipartisan warfare
Reconnaissance—Communication—Supply—Bombing and strafing in antipartisan operations—Bombing and strafing partisan-held areas—Distribution of leaflets—Fly-over effect of airpower—Partisan efforts to counter German air operations—The potential of airpower in antipartisan warfare

PART II: CASE STUDIES

VII. The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area of Smolensk Oblast *by Gerhard L. Weinberg*

§I. The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area, 1941
The area and the war in 1941—Partisan organization in the Smolensk area before 2 October 1941—The Vyazma pocket, October-November 1941— The partisan movement, October-December 1941

§II. The Soviet breakthrough and the organization of a large-scale partisan movement, January-March 1942
The Soviet breakthrough and its implications—The formation of a large-scale partisan movement

§III. The first German efforts to destroy the partisans
Initial German reactions—Operation "Munich"

§IV. The local population between partisans and Germans
Partisan political and administrative activity—The "bandits"—The attitude of the local population

§V. The partisan movement, June 1942 to September 1943
The German offensive—Partisan reactions to the German offensive—German efforts to prevent the revival of partisan activity—Soviet efforts to revive the partisan movement—The fate of the partisan movement, June 1942 to September 1943

VIII. The Bryansk area *by Kurt DeWitt and Wilhelm Moll*

§I. Summary and conclusions
1941 Military events and initial occupation—Early manifestations of partisan warfare—Intensification and growth of the partisan movement—The final phase and the German retreat—Conclusions

§II. Institutional characteristics of the partisan movement
Organization—Direction and control

§III. Operational characteristics of partisan warfare
Disruptive activity in the German rear—Antipartisan warfare—Collaboration with the partisans

IX. The Polotsk lowland *by Ralph Mavrogordato and Earl Ziemke*

§I. Geographic, economic, and ethnographic character of the region
Topography—Military geography—Economy—The people

§II. Summary of historical events
Military events, 1941, and initial occupation—Early manifestations of partisan warfare—Intensification of partisan warfare—German antipartisan operations, 1942-43—Final stages of partisan warfare and the German retreat

§III. Institutional characteristics
The brigade commander—The officers—The commissar

X. The North Caucasus *by Alexander Dallin*

§I. Background
The area and the problem—The campaign and the objectives—Soviet policy in the Caucasus, 1941-1942—German policy in the North Caucasus—The Germans and the indigenous population

§II. The Caucasus partisans: Two case studies
The Yegorov complex—The Kalmyk area

§III. Organization and control

§IV. Soviet agents and the partisan movement

§V. Summary and conclusions

XI. The Dnepr bend area *by John A. Armstrong*

§I. Geographic, economic, and ethnographic character of the region

§II. Summary of historical developments

§III. Evaluation

APPENDIX Selected Soviet sources on the World War II partisan movement

§I. The organization of the partisan movement in 1941
Basic directive on organization of partisans—Basic directive on organization and tactics of partisans—The partisan oath—Report on partisan groups at Northwest Front—Report on partisan groups in Poltava area of the Ukraine—Life history of Ukrainian Staff Chief Strokach

§II. Soviet directives to partisans
Covering letter to Document 8—Order No. 0018 demanding increase in sabotage—Establishment of training courses for partisan officers—Demand for prompt reports—Order concerning collaborators—Communist work plan for occupied territories

§III. Partisan tactics
List of essential elements of information—Manual for political reconnaissance—Instructions for inspector of partisan intelligence activities

§IV. Partisan reports
Activity report of a "troika"—Report of the Morogov group for part of 1942—Report of the Morogov group for May 1941—Records of the Morogov group—Protocol of a Komsomol meeting—Komsomol activity in Drissa Rayon in August 1942—Covering letter criticizing Executive Committee of Drissa Rayon—Report on a staff conference in the Falalayev Brigade—Report that the commander of the Falalayev Brigade substituted another name for that of the man who was to replace him

§V. Appeals to collaborators
To Soviet nationals serving with the German Army—To members of the Weise Ukrainian Regiment near Bryansk—To policemen and village mayors working with the Germans—To auxiliary police in Smolensk area—By Political Section of Northwest Front to all collaborators—To collaborators, attacking General Vlasov—By former members of a collaborator unit urging desertion to partisans—By former members of auxiliary police urging

desertion to partisans—To an officer in auxiliary police urging desertion—To a member of auxiliary police urging support of partisan activities—To head of a labor section—To members of a Lithuanian police unit organized by the Germans

§VI. Partisan propaganda and relations with the local population
Poster answering a German appeal to villagers—Leaflet left in a village south of Minsk—Warning to villagers not to help Germans—Excerpts from newspaper The Partisan of Gomel Oblast*—Curfew and traffic regulation in a partisan area—Order for turning over weapons and state-owned supplies in a partisan area—Brigade order forbidding felling of trees and delivery of food for the Germans—Order forbidding voluntary labor service in Germany and food deliveries to the Germans—Rights and duties of a village commandant in partisan areas—Soviet leaflet of Northwest Front describing partisan killing of a German official—Soviet or partisan leaflet directed at peasants*

§VII. The Grishin Regiment
Rating of Grishin by Communist party in Smolensk—Excerpts from regimental operation reports—Intelligence reports of battalions of the Grishin Regiment—Order for execution of a scout—Disciplinary order concerning relations with women—Punishment for looting—Execution for leaving post and exhibiting cowardice—Order establishing section for agitation and propaganda—Order concerning planned movement through the front to the Red Army—Grishin's appeal to troops to hold out until arrival of the Red Army—Order to Grishin to coordinate sabotage activities with Red Army offensive—Order to Grishin concerning treatment of American aviators—German interrogations of former members of Grishin Regiment—Organizational chart of the Grishin Regiment

§VIII. The Kovpak Regiment
Appeal to members of the Komsomol in the Kovpak Regiment—Order for execution of an officer in the Kovpak Regiment—Order concerning relations with Polish population and Ukrainian nationalists—Procedure in case of encounters with Ukrainian nationalist partisans—Recruitment of Poles into the regiment—Punishment for partisan looting of Polish population—Telegram for help from the regiment commissar when the regiment was surrounded by Germans

§IX. Partisan Diaries
Of a young partisan concerning personal and combat activities—Of a company politruk containing information on airpower and problems facing the political officer of a small partisan unit

§X. List of Sources
Glossary and key to abbreviations used in the text
Selected bibliography

List of Figures

1 Generalized structure of the partisan brigade
2 Staff of the partisan movement of the Ukraine
3 Operative group in the rear of the enemy
4 Cooperation between partisans and Soviet intelligence
5 The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area of Smolensk Oblast
6 The front situation in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area, 1941-42
7 The area around Yelnya
8 The German offensive in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area, May 1942
9 Bryansk encirclement battles, 1941

10 Partisan concentrations in the Bryansk area
11 Partisan disruptive activities in the Bryansk area
12 The Polotsk Lowland in relation to western USSR
13 The German front, 1941-42
14 Partisan concentrations and front line in the Polotsk Lowland, 1944
15 Partisan control of roads in the Polotsk Lowland, 1944
16 Geographic regions of the Caucasus
17 Political divisions of the North Caucasus
18 The Yegorov complex
19 The staging area of the Yegorov complex
20 Probable organization of the Yegorov complex
21 The Kalmyk region, 1942
22 The Karachai region
23 The Dnepr bend region
24 The Novomoskovsk-Pavlograd area

CHAPTER I

Introduction

John A. Armstrong

§I. The Significance of the Soviet Partisan Experience

Viewed from the perspective of the 1960's, partisan activities in the USSR during World War II appear as part of a series of guerrilla movements which have constituted a most significant aspect of twentieth-century warfare. There are indeed important resemblances between Soviet partisan activity and other contemporary guerrilla operations. In several respects, however, the Soviet experience is highly unusual, though not entirely unique. One way to approach an understanding of this experience is to analyze the peculiar objectives of the antagonists which shaped the conflict in the German-occupied territory of the Soviet Union.

A. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ANTAGONISTS

1. The Soviet Objective

Historically, guerrilla forces have been the weapon of the side which is militarily weaker. When they first arise, guerrillas are a substitute for an adequate conventional force, though they may become the auxiliaries of an offensive army if the military balance shifts in the course of the war. From a strategical standpoint, the Soviet partisans clearly played these traditional roles. When the Soviet regime began developing partisan forces, its conventional armed forces were apparently greatly inferior in strength, though not in over-all size, to those which Nazi Germany could employ on the eastern front. At least until December 1941 the very existence of the Soviet system was in doubt; the margin by which the Red Army succeeded in stopping the German advance was an extremely narrow one. Under these circumstances, even a very small increment of help from irregular forces could have been decisive; consequently, it seems clear the prime immediate objective in developing the partisan forces was military. No human costs, in individual or social terms, were regarded as too high, so long as the partisan activity contributed to the overriding goal of preserving the Soviet system.

In this respect, there was little distinction between the sacrifices exacted from Soviet citizens affected by partisan activity and the sacrifices exacted from those involved in other aspects of the

war effort, as exemplified by the starving population of besieged Leningrad, the millions dispatched to industrial relocation sites with wholly inadequate living conditions, or the Red Army soldiers. The principle that no opportunity to impede the enemy should be renounced because of "humanitarian" considerations was emphatically stated by the Soviet regime from the moment it became involved in the war and has been reiterated consistently since then. Even major allies such as the United States were criticized for weakness in surrendering positions to avoid loss of life. This accusation of pusillanimity has been a constant theme in Soviet attacks on the non-Communist European resistance movements which sought to preserve their forces by avoiding action until the general military balance became more favorable.

[John A. Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism: The Communist Party of* ***the*** *Soviet Union from 1934 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 166.]

As the threat to the existence of the Soviet system gradually diminished, political objectives for the partisan forces became more significant; indeed (as will be discussed in Sect. Ill below) one may infer that they became dominant. But the position of the Soviet regime in this regard was peculiar. Ordinarily, a government which employs guerrilla forces to help it *regain* its territory is interested in maintaining the social system of the country *and* restoring the authority of the government. Certainly the Soviet regime was interested in restoring Soviet government in the occupied territories. Moreover, the objective was clearly the restoration of the embracing Communist totalitarian system, of which the government was only a subsystem. But, before 1941, Communist totalitarianism was a goal rather than the status quo even within the USSR. The Communist prescription calls not only for the imposition of a new set of institutions upon a pre-existing society, but for a complete reshaping of society and even of individual psychology.

It is true that in those parts of the USSR which had been under Soviet control since the end of the Civil War the process of reshaping society had by 1941 made considerable headway. Especially after the agricultural collectivization and forced industrialization of the 1930's, much of the old social fabric had been disrupted. From the formal standpoint Soviet society had been reconstituted on a new basis. However, one-fourth of the population in the territory occupied by the Germans had lived under Soviet rule for such a short time (since 1939 or 1940) that the process of reconstructing society had hardly begun. In those areas, therefore, the existing social structure was fundamentally objectionable to the regime. Even in the "old" Soviet areas many traits of the pre-Soviet society survived. The bulk of the population (particularly, as will appear later, in areas where partisan activity was feasible) consisted of peasants. Although formally grouped in collective farms (which were officially regarded as only a step in the direction of "socialization"), the peasants retained many of their traditional communal and familial ties. Under normal circumstances the regime hesitated to disrupt these ties violently. The political and economic costs to the peacetime Soviet system of the resistance which such disruption might provoke would be high. Moreover, the traditional ties served certain short-run purposes of the regime, such as maintenance of a high rural birth rate and suppression of juvenile delinquency. These considerations, however, ceased to have much if any force once the population passed under enemy control. On the other hand, if the objectionable social features dissolved in general chaos, the ultimate construction of Communist society in the postwar era might even be facilitated.

There is no direct evidence that the Soviet leaders pursued the calculation presented above, nor is it likely that any will be forthcoming. It is quite possible, indeed, that no one in authority ever consciously reasoned along these lines. However, it is evident, at least, that the Soviet leaders had far less reason to be concerned with preserving the traditional substructure of society than would normally be the case with a regime seeking to restore its authority. The Soviet regime's

position in this respect was, of course, entirely consistent with its insistence on all-out attack against the enemy, regardless of human cost:

I knew, of course, that the Hitlerites might send a punitive expedition to the village, accuse its citizens of contacts with the partisans and cruelly avenge themselves on the peaceful population. But I also knew that the population, which was driven to repair the enemy's roads, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, delayed the hour of victory by some time. But who can determine what a minute of military activity costs?

[*G.* M. Linkov, *Voina* v *tylu vraga* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Kho-duzhestvennoye Literatury, 1959), pp. 93-94.]

One is forced to conclude, therefore, that, while on the surface the Soviet partisan movement appears to resemble that of a guerrilla force seeking to restore the authority of an invaded state, in many respects it was really closer to the guerrilla movements in countries where Communists are trying to build a new system on the wreckage of the traditional administrative and social structure. As Franz Borkenau has pointed out, Communist partisans in Europe during World War II had an incalculable advantage over the non-Communist resistance movements, for the former, having a vested interest in social disruption, were prepared to face drastic reprisals, while the latter were constantly restrained in their tactics both by moral considerations and by the desire to avoid extreme civilian losses.

[Franz Borkenau, *European Communism* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1953), pp. 319, 358.]

The paradox of the Soviet situation lies in the fact that a guerrilla movement enjoying the support of the established government of the country could be used for ruthless, unlimited action.

2. The German Objective

In its way, the German position in regard to the partisans was just as unusual as the Soviet. Most contemporary antiguerrilla forces have been seeking to re-establish legitimate authority. Their task is usually enormously more difficult than the guerrillas' because the latter have only to smash an intricate and delicate web of economic installations and social relations while the defenders must not only defeat the guerrillas but do so in such a way as to preserve the system which is under attack. Failure to realize this basic difference between objectives, or lack of the patience and resources required to complete the more difficult defensive task, have been major causes for failure in antiguerrilla operations. Occasionally commentators on the Germans' antipartisan activities attribute the same shortcomings to them. In fact, however, the German objectives were so basically different from those of "defensive" antiguerrillas that the comparison has little meaning.

The overriding German objective at all times was to knock the Soviet Union out of the war. This objective was, of course, essentially Adolf Hitler's personal goal, for he realized that only complete victory would preserve his own position. Once Hitler had taken the foolhardy step of attacking the USSR, his only real prospect of eventual victory over the "Grand Coalition" of his enemies lay in eliminating Soviet military strength before Great Britain and the United States could bring the full weight of their resources to bear on Germany. At most, Hitler had only one or two years in which to achieve this goal. All longer-range considerations in Eastern Europe were subordinated to the military defeat of the Soviet Union. Though his premises are abhorrent, and his specific measures were often absurd by any standard, there was logic in the way in which Hitler tenaciously pursued this objective.

[Hitler's intervention in the strategic conduct of the war on the eastern front was notorious for its blunders; in addition, Hitler's racial prejudices led him to divert important resources from the war effort, as in his ruthless extermination of the Jews.]

Hitler's overriding objective of destroying Soviet military power within a very short time meant that the German command regarded the partisans as crucially important only insofar as they impeded the German war effort. Whatever success the partisans might achieve in controlling territory or influencing the population was insignificant, as long as it did not reduce German capacity to strike at the basic Soviet military position. The vast stretches of occupied Europe between Germany itself and the German armies at the front were important only as a necessary avenue of communication and a source of materials (including slave labor) for pursuing the war. As a result, the German authorities did not feel that they were faced with many of the problems which usually confront an antiguerrilla force. Secure control of territory, allegiance of the population, maintenance of institutional patterns or the traditional social system did not per se interest the German authorities. Of course, the Nazi regime intended to dominate and exploit the occupied areas of Eastern Europe for centuries. Nazi ideology, however, regarded the inhabitants of the area (or at least the Slavic majority) as inferiors who were to be exploited ruthlessly and slowly reduced in numbers if not exterminated. If the course of military operations produced chaos which reduced the numbers and social viability of the Slavs, so much the better.

Consequently, no considerations of the welfare of the people in the area of partisan activity were in principle to act as impediments to ruthless conduct of antiguerrilla warfare. The Nazi leadership itself sometimes recognized the desirability of securing the cooperation of the local population for the sake of the war effort. The limits which Hitler placed on this cooperation, however, suggest the limits to the "rationality" of Hitler's conduct of the war. Until the war was almost certainly lost, he refused to allow former Soviet citizens (with minor exceptions) to bear arms even to fight the Soviet regime. To be sure, it seems very likely that even an early and massive attempt to enlist military manpower in the occupied territories would not have been decisive, for the crucial battles were lost by the Germans long before (given shortages of matériel and other factors) the Slavic anti-Communist armies could have become really effective forces.

3. The Resultant of the German and Soviet Objectives

The combination of Soviet and German objectives produced a situation in which measures of almost unparalleled ruthlessness became the norm of guerrilla and antiguerrilla warfare alike. Nazi doctrine glorified the use of violence and looked with distrust upon anyone who exhibited inclinations toward showing mercy. For the German antiguerrillas, ruthlessness became not only a practical norm, but a rule. While some antiguerrilla leaders, particularly among the middle and lower army officer corps, did try to exercise moderation, for reasons both of expediency and of humanity, among others sadistic tendencies toward wanton brutality and destructiveness led to excesses even beyond those encouraged by the official policy.

[On German policy, see especially the comprehensive discussion by Alexander Dallin in *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945* (London: Macmillan, 1957, New York: St. Martin's, 1957).]

Apart from individual instances of sadism, Soviet partisan activity was guided not by *desire* to inflict suffering, but by *disregard* of suffering, which was viewed as "necessary" for war purposes. Frequently the practical distinction between the two types of motivations was not very evident, however.

B. THE RELEVANCE OF THE SOVIET PARTISAN EXPERIENCE

The peculiar objectives of the antagonists constitute a major reason for the special nature of partisan warfare in the occupied USSR. In addition—as will appear in the following sections of this chapter—many other special factors, such as the nature of the terrain, the role of economic activities, and the availability of military forces, contributed to make the Soviet partisan experience unique. It is understandable, therefore, that some writers have tended to depreciate the importance of the Soviet experience for understanding more recent guerrilla operations.

[E.g., Raymond L. Garthoff, "Unconventional Warfare in Communist Strategy," *Foreign Affairs,* XL (1962), 570.]

One is certainly inclined to agree that the differences between the Soviet partisans and nationalist or even Communist guerrillas in tropical underdeveloped areas is so great as to render it impossible to make many generalizations applying to both. In many instances, however, the sheer extent of contrasts may make a comparison useful. Moreover, it is by no means certain that future guerrilla movements will operate in the conditions which have characterized the "national liberation" guerrillas of the 1950's. The latter have been, at the outset at least, far less well provided with modern instruments of war than the counter-guerrillas. As will be shown, however, Soviet partisans were often better equipped in light weapons than their adversaries, and had a considerable measure of air support. There are several contingencies in which such "technical parity" between guerrilla and counterguerrilla forces might arise in the future.

One contingency—probably remote—is "broken-back" warfare following major nuclear strikes. If such warfare can be envisaged at all, it might include relatively well-equipped guerrillas battling an "occupying" force which had scarcely better weapons. A considerably more likely situation would be an artificially limited war. One can certainly conceive of circumstances in which the opponents would agree tacitly to restrict air operations to a limited area, for such, in effect, was the nature of the Korean conflict of 1950-53. If the side supporting the guerrillas were able to obtain air parity or superiority in the limited area, the equipment and techniques of the guerrillas might resemble the Soviet situation in many important respects. In situations such as the Greek Communist revolt of 1946-49 and the Viet-minh advance in 1954, Communist extension of air support to the guerrillas was no doubt inhibited by Western technical superiority in the air and by the possibility of nuclear retaliation. These factors certainly cannot be assumed for all future situations.

However useful an examination of the Soviet partisan experience may be for understanding unconventional warfare, it is, in this writer's opinion, far more useful for the insights it provides into the nature of the Soviet system. Since the nature of these insights will be presented at some length in Section III of this chapter, here one need only stress their importance. Between 1918 and the early 1930's, the Soviet system was relatively open to outside observation. Western visitors could travel about the country with considerable freedom. Restrictions upon contacts between individual Soviet citizens and foreigners were limited. The regime published a great deal of information (for example, the voluminous 1926 census data). Evidence of controversy within official circles was abundant, sometimes even taking the form of published debates in Communist Party meetings. Major dissident leaders like Leon Trotsky revealed much of the real nature of Soviet politics. Taken together, these sources of information provided a basis, though by no means a wholly satisfactory one, for the objective analysis of the Soviet system. Since Stalin's death in 1953 there has been a tendency for similar sources of information to become available, although so far, at least, the sources are greatly inferior to those of the early decades.

It is the intervening twenty years which really constitute the "dark ages" of our knowledge of the Soviet system. Yet these were the years in which the system, still embryonic in the early thirties,

became the mature Communist totalitarianism which we know today. Any evidence which relates to that period is, therefore, of enormous importance.

Recently two monumental scholarly studies based upon unique bodies of evidence relating to the period before Soviet entry into World War II have appeared. Merle Fainsod's *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* is a comprehensive analysis of the voluminous records of a single provincial Party organization.

[Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.]

The work lays bare the dynamics of institutional interactions, and provides irrefutable documentation for a wide range of practices employed by the Soviet regime. *The Soviet Citizen* by Alex Inkeles and Raymond Bauer is based upon interviews with over two thousand former Soviet citizens, the vast majority of whom left Soviet control in the early stages of World War II.

[Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959.]

While Fainsod's book views the Soviet system primarily from the "insider's" vantage point, Inkeles and Bauer look at it from below, as it affects the ordinary citizen. Together these works complement each other admirably to provide a kind of base line against which later developments in the Soviet system can be measured.

It is hoped that the present volume can make a contribution toward further definition of this base line. Our work lacks the quantity and variety of Soviet political documentation which characterizes Fainsod's work, and does not rest upon the wealth of sociological information which Inkeles and Bauer accumulated. The present study has, however, some special advantages. It deals with a crisis situation of extreme intensity. It is undoubtedly true that the Soviet system—at least until fairly recently—has been one of constant crisis. But the problems posed in the effort to assert Soviet authority in areas nominally controlled by the enemy implied a crisis of the system far exceeding any other it has faced. This crisis related predominantly to a rural environment, for which our other sources of information are unusually meager. While our information on the partisan episode is partially based on contemporary Soviet documents, we have the advantage of being able to check the documents against two other kinds of information: subsequent Soviet accounts, which are unusually numerous and detailed; and the voluminous reports of the German occupation officials. While no one of these types of sources is satisfactory by itself, taken together they provide about as much information as the student of social and political processes can ordinarily expect to obtain.

In the following sections the two themes which have been outlined above —the partisan movement as irregular warfare and the relation of the partisans to the Soviet system—will be discussed in somewhat more detail. One should not gain the impression, however, that these two facets of the partisan experience are separable except for purposes of analysis. Even more important, one should not make the facile identification of the partisans' relation to irregular warfare with the "military aspect" of the subject, for irregular warfare is by its very nature political and social as well as military. The meaning of irregular warfare in the occupied USSR cannot be grasped without constant attention to the political circumstances in which it arose and the social and political conditions under which it developed.

§II. Soviet Partisan Operations as Unconventional Warfare

A. THE ORIGIN AND TASKS OF THE PARTISANS

1. Precedents

In the preceding section it was suggested that there is a kind of natural affinity between Communism and guerrilla warfare, for the special objectives of Communist movements enable them to employ guerrilla tactics with unusual effectiveness. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that even prior to 1941 there was a long tradition of Communist guerrillas, or, as Soviet writers preferred to call them, partisans. In 1906, Lenin himself wrote on the subject, although his discussion of terrorist tactics which might be employed by the Bolsheviks against the Tsarist authorities has had little practical relevance to more recent partisan operations.

[Trans, in Franklin M. Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941-1961* (Glencoe, 111.: The Free Press, 1962), pp. 65-79.]

During the Russian Civil War of 1918-20 the Bolsheviks employed partisan units very extensively. The "regular" armies of the Reds and their various opponents were in a state of reorganization; the armies' training was inadequate and their arms were far below the standard of Western European military forces of the period. In addition, the rapidly fluctuating fronts and the enormous extent of the theaters of military operations placed a premium on swift, stealthy maneuvers. Under these circumstances, irregular forces were very useful militarily. A considerable number of partisan commanders like Nikolai Shchors gained places (albeit minor ones) in the pantheon of heroes of the Revolution and Civil War. On the other hand, the Bolshevik drive for centralized control and iron discipline was opposed to the individualistic and anarchic tendencies of the irregulars. "Ataman" leaders like Nestor Makhno and G. Grigoryev, who had built up their own guerrilla followings before joining the Bolsheviks, fiercely resisted attempts to reduce all guerrilla leaders to complete subordination. Even loyal Communists who had been assigned to direct partisan activities sometimes developed tendencies toward independence. It is unfortunate that no detailed study has been made of the voluminous Soviet publications during the interwar period on the Civil War partisan experience, for such an examination might throw considerable light on the early evolution of the partisans in World War II. In the absence of such a study, all one can profitably say is that the regime learned the lesson that partisans were promising as an auxiliary weapon but apt to prove two-edged if not kept under strict control.

The evidence on Soviet evaluation of foreign Communist guerrilla activities is slighter but better known. At least as far as this writer has been able to discover, Soviet writers have never given any attention to such feats as Luis Prestes' march through the hinterlands of Brazil in 1924-27, although soon after this episode Prestes became a Communist. The Soviet Communists, on the other hand, were deeply involved in the use of guerrilla tactics during the Spanish Civil War. A high Soviet NKVD official, Eitin-gon, was in charge of organizing Republican guerrilla activities. Since during World War II Eitingon became second-in-command of the Fourth Administration of the NKVD, the division concerned with partisan activities, it is very probable that the Spanish experience was utilized.

[Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* p. 163.]

Spanish refugees in the USSR were especially trained for technical assignments with the partisans such as demolition work.

[See Chap. II, Sect. Ill, E; and M. Makedonskii, *Flamy a nad Krymon* (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1960), p. 154.]

The first commander of the partisan movement in the Crimea had been one of the small group of high-level Soviet military advisors in Spain.

[Cf. the accounts, virtually identical from the factual standpoint, in the reports of the German Eleventh Army (GMDS, AOK 11, 35774/16) and Yekaterina N. Shapko, *Partizanskoye Dvizhenive v Krymu v 1941-1944 gg.* (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1959), PP- 155-56.]

On the other hand, Soviet writers who have discussed the Spanish Civil War have tended to depreciate the importance of guerrilla activities there. One writer of an unpublished dissertation denies that the Spanish Republican partisans were comparable to those in the USSR during World War II, because the former did not represent a "mass movement" holding a broad stretch of territory, but were basically "diversionist" groups sent into enemy territory for a limited time to perform specific tasks.

[Marklen T. Meshcheryakov, "Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Ispanii v borbe za demokraticheskiye svobody i natsionalnuyu nezavisimost Ispanii (1936-1939 gg)," unpublished dissertation, Lenin Pedagogical Institute, Moscow, 1953, pp. 207-208.]

While the Soviet regime employed such "diversionist" units (analogous to the American Rangers) itself, it always considered them to be less significant than the partisans.

Whether or not the Soviet evaluation of the Spanish Republican partisans is wholly accurate, there is no doubt that the latter were far less important militarily and politically than the Communist guerrillas operating in China at the same time. Every serious student of Chinese Communist guerrilla warfare has concluded that Mao developed his partisan movement without much reliance upon Soviet models. In his "Problems in the Guerrilla War of Resistance against Japan" (1939), Mao refers respectfully to the Soviet Civil War experience, pointing out that it demonstrated that guerrillas were only secondary as compared to the regular forces.

["Problems in the Guerrilla War of Resistance against Japan" (1939), trans, in Gene Z. Hanrahan, *Chinese Communist Guerilla Tactics: A Source Book* (n.p.: mimeographed, July 1952), p. 14.]

But Mao devotes no more attention to Soviet precedents than to many non-Communist guerrilla episodes, and nowhere suggests that the Soviet experiences should form a detailed guide for the Chinese.

Indeed, there is considerably more reason to think that the Soviet concept of guerrilla warfare was influenced by the Chinese experience than the reverse, though here, again, lack of detailed investigations limits the degree to which one can generalize. As noted below, the early Soviet scheme for partisan warfare appeared to embody some of Mao's principles, applied, however, in a mechanical fashion. The most striking parallel was between the original Soviet scheme for a partisan company in each rayon and in Mao's prescription for a detachment of platoon or company strength in each small administrative unit *(hsien,* roughly equivalent to the Soviet rayon).

[*Ibid.,* p. 22.]

At least one Soviet commentator paid close attention to this scheme of organization, but appears to have underestimated the importance of the fact that this territorially based detachment was only the lower link of a chain which included progressively larger and more mobile units.

[A. Kolan, "Partizanskaya voina v okkupirovannykh rayonakh Kitaya," *Kommuni-sticheskii Internatsional,* No. 6, 1940, pp. 60-72.]

In general, Soviet observers seem to have misunderstood many aspects of the Chinese experience;there is, conversely, some evidence that the Chinese Communists regarded Soviet World War II efforts to develop a distinctive partisan doctrine with contempt.

[Charles P. Fitzgerald, *Revolution in China* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1952), p. 96, quotes a story, current after World War II in Peking, that one of Mao's generals said, on reading a book which Stalin had sent Mao on the Soviet partisan experience during the war, "If we had had this as our textbook we should have been annihilated ten years ago." Cf. Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr., and Gene Z. Hanrahan, "The Revolutionary Strategy of Mao Tse-Tung," *Political Science Quarterly,* LXX (1955), 321-340.]

2. Planning

Even taken by itself, Soviet concern with earlier examples of partisan warfare would suggest that the regime devoted some attention to the possibility of employing guerrillas in the event of a future invasion of the USSR. Nevertheless, the evidence that a concrete contingency plan for using partisans had been developed before June 1941 is not wholly conclusive. Two reasons for this are fairly obvious. In the first place, no regime can afford to make the defeatist admission to the general population or even to large circles of its officials that it expects to lose much of its territory. If the Soviet authorities had widely disseminated instructions for partisan warfare it would have been an admission not only that Stalin's boasted policy of keeping the USSR out of the war through the Nazi-Soviet pact was a failure, but that the failure would entail tragic losses for the country. Secondly, the top officials of the regime almost surely did not expect that the enemy would occupy very large areas of the USSR, even if war did occur. In this connection it is interesting to note that Mao (writing before the Nazi-Soviet pact) predicted that even if an invader of the USSR were not repulsed for some time, the territory he occupied would not be extensive.

[Translated in Hanrahan, p. 22.]

In the circumstances just described, one may hypothesize that a contingency plan for partisan activity would be a carefully guarded secret confined to the inner circle of the regime and a few trusted specialists, preferably in the security-conscious police agencies. Because it would not be safe to consult lower officials familiar with local variations, the plan would tend to be highly schematic and rigid. Because there would be insufficient time to select and train personnel, the tendency would be to rely on especially committed members of the Party and state apparatus, especially the police. In fact, the initial scheme of partisan organization (see below, and Chap. II, Sect. II) very closely approximated the hypothetical model just sketched. This coincidence provides a certain measure of indirect evidence that prewar planning had taken place.

There is some direct evidence. The German counterguerrilla staffs concluded that plans were made before the war, though the credibility of the Germans' statements is diminished by the fact that they quite obviously grossly exaggerate the extent of preparation. If the Germans possessed information from secret Soviet documents or from interrogations of high-level Soviet officials, they do not cite it. In fact, one of the better-informed NKVD officials interrogated denied that the NKVD took any steps to prepare for partisan activity before June 25, 1941.

[AOK 16, Ic, Interrogation of GPU Lieutenant Alexandr Zhigunov, 18 November 1941 (U.S. trans.), EAP-3a-11/2.]

(See Chap. II, Sect. II, A.) But postwar Soviet publications are considerably more revealing. It is true that most of them do not provide any information on the very early stage of partisan planning. However, Aleksei Fyodorov, in one of the earliest and most important partisan memoirs, states that the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee "had already mapped out the entire organizational scheme of an underground movement" by July 4.

[Aleksei Fvodorov, *The Underground Committee Carries On* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), p. 16. This version is translated from the 1947 Russian edition.]

The first official directive (kept strictly secret when issued) which postwar Soviet sources quote, is a paragraph in a letter of June 29 from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party.

[Quoted in *Partizanskaya borba s nemetsko-fashistskimi okkupantami na territorii Smolenshchiny, 1941-1943 gg.: Dokumenty i materialy* (Smolensk: Smolenskoye Knizh-skoye Izdatelstvo, 1962), p. 18.]

A very recent Soviet memoir, however, indicates that Nikita Khrushchev (then head of the Ukrainian Communist Party) gave fairly detailed instructions on partisan organization to a provincial Party secretary as early as June 27—five days after the beginning of the war.

[Vasilii Begma and Luka Kyzya, *Shlyakhy neskorenykh* (Kiev: Radyanskyi Pysmen-nyk, 1962), p. 26.]

That same day, Moisei S. Spivak, Ukrainian secretary for cadres, began organizing partisans in Kamenets-Podolsk oblast (province).

[*Sovetskiye partizany: Iz istorii partizanskogo dvizheniya v gody velikoi oteche-stvennoi voiny* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960), p. 441.]

It is, of course, possible that the Soviet sources wish to overemphasize the role of the regime, and especially of the current leadership, in initiating partisan activities. On the whole, however, the Soviet statements made in so many different forms over a period of fifteen years, seem plausible. If instructions could be issued within a week after war started, it is almost certain that some contingency planning had taken place before hostilities began.

3. Tasks

As indicated in Section I of this chapter, the initial, overriding objective of the Soviet regime in forming the partisan movement was to contribute to the military defense of the system against the invader. While political objectives were very probably considered from the beginning, they were distinctly secondary until a considerably later stage, and need not be considered here. Even the important military objective of intelligence-gathering was secondary in the initial scheme for partisan activity. Underground intelligence networks altogether apart from the partisan organization were set up; agents of these networks were ordered not to contact partisans. (See Chap. V, Sect. I.) The partisans' initial scheme of activity would in any case have left them poorly equipped for intelligence operations, for they were meagerly supplied with radio transmitters and air liaison. Instead, the principal activity of the partisans was to be direct, though small-scale, attack upon the German forces. Partisan tactics were to emphasize attacks on isolated or unguarded German installations and units, disruption of communications, and sabotage of military facilities. (See Appendix, Documents 1 and 2.) In other words, the partisans were to carry on a "little war" in the strictest sense of the term, by chipping away at the enemy

military machine. Though their effect would necessarily be limited, it would be directed to the most crucial immediate objective, the avoidance of a complete Soviet military catastrophe.

B. THE ENVIRONMENT OF PARTISAN OPERATIONS

This, as nearly as one can infer, was the original Soviet concept of partisan activity in 1941. In practice, as will be shown below, the partisan movement developed along quite different lines. This development was very largely shaped by the peculiar environment in which the partisans operated.

1. The Natural Environment

One occasionally encounters the view that the worse the terrain is for ordinary economic and military purposes, the better it is for guerrilla operations. This is rather less than a half-truth. If partisans are to be effective militarily, they must be within easy striking range of military objectives; if they are to operate politically, they must be in contact with a significant population. For partisans to withdraw into impenetrable terrain means that they voluntarily end their effectiveness as instruments of irregular warfare. Since such terrain nearly always cannot provide enough food to support a significant number of partisans, they often end their lives as well. The partisans can operate effectively only in areas which are relatively impenetrable to regular military forces equipped with heavy weapons, yet which can be fairly easily traversed by lightly armed guerrillas moving on foot or horseback. These areas must be fairly close to important settled districts and channels of communications; very commonly the most suitable areas are in zones of transition between easy terrain and unproductive wastes.

Mountainous areas so frequently provide the appropriate environment for guerrillas that one can almost consider the typical guerrilla as a "mountaineer." In the occupied USSR, however, mountainous areas were few. There were only the northwestern portion of the Caucasus and its foot-hills, the small Yaila range in the Crimea, and the Carpathians in the extreme west of the Ukraine. Soviet partisans tried to utilize all of these mountain areas, but with very little success. The basic reason was the highly unsympathetic attitude of the local populations. Some of the most likely Caucasus areas were inhabited by Moslem groups which rebelled against the Soviet regime even before the German armies drew near. Outside the rebellious areas there remained enough suitable terrain in the Caucasian foothills for a small-scale Soviet partisan operation. However, the partisans attracted practically no local support, and as outsiders they were evidently unable to take advantage of the terrain. It is rather striking to note that the most successful "North Caucasus" partisans actually operated in the swamps of the Kuban River delta rather than in the mountains. (See Chap. X.)

The Crimean partisans—whom we cannot treat in detail in this volume —were much more numerous (their strength ranged between two and ten thousand), but they probably underwent more hardships for the sake of fewer accomplishments than any group of partisans of comparable size. Early Soviet accounts freely admit that a very large part of the difficulties of the Crimean partisans arose from the fact that the inhabitants of the Yaila were Tatars violently opposed to the Soviet system. The post-Stalin accounts are more guarded, but recognize the crucial role that Tatar anti-guerrillas, familiar with the mountain terrain, played in helping the Germans track down the partisans.

[Ivan Kozlov, *V krymskom podpolye: Vospominaniya* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel 1947), pp. 69-70; Makedonskii, p. 189; Shapko, p. 18.]

The great distance of the Carpathians from the Soviet lines prior to late 1943 would have made it difficult, at best, to establish a partisan force there. In the summer of 1943, however, the "roving band" under Sidor Kovpak tried to establish a footing on the north Carpathian slope. The bitterly anti-Soviet West Ukrainian population gave him no support or information; under these circumstances his unit was nearly destroyed. Later this region became the seat of the strongest *anti-Soviet* guerrilla force which has ever developed.

[John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (2nd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 296 ff.]

As will be shown later (Sect. III, D), Communist partisans operating in other Carpathian areas where the population was at least not uniformly hostile achieved significantly greater results.

The above analysis suggests that even the most favorable terrain is more than offset by a strongly hostile local population. Throughout most of the nonmountainous portions of the occupied USSR, the population was never uniformly hostile to the partisans and became increasingly favorably disposed toward them. (See Sect. II below, and Chap. IV.) However, over half of the territory occupied by the Germans consisted of steppe, flat and treeless except for small swamp and forest areas along the watercourses. The original plan of partisan operations made little distinction between the steppe and less open regions. Each district in the steppe, as elsewhere, was to have its partisan detachment. It is interesting to note that a Chinese Communist commentator (1938) on guerrilla tactics had argued that partisans could operate in the plains by taking advantage of small areas of forest and other impassable terrain.

[Chu Te, "On Guerrilla Warfare," trans, in Hanrahan, p. 73.]

With certain exceptions noted below, the steppe proved in fact to be quite untenable for the Soviet partisans. The detachments which were formed tried to maintain themselves in isolated forests or swamps, but, unable to evade attack in these restricted areas, they were quickly destroyed by the Germans. (See Chap. XI.)

The northern third of the occupied area was far more suitable for partisan activity. While flat, it was forested and intersected by numerous swamps, lakes, and sluggish watercourses. This region alone became the seat of a vigorous and extensive partisan movement. It should be emphasized, however, that the partisans did not operate extensively in the Pripet marshes, historically one of the least accessible regions of Europe. The depths of the Pripet marshes provided neither food for large numbers of partisans nor attractive targets for partisan attack. Instead, the partisans were based in better-drained forest areas such as Bryansk, in the innumerable small swamp regions, and on the settled fringes of the Pripet.

Even in the northern portions of the occupied area, the partisans suffered under certain handicaps in comparison to many of the postwar guerrilla groups. Whereas the latter have typically operated in regions of tropical or at least mildly temperate climate, the Soviet partisans faced winters of extreme severity. Nearly all partisan accounts stress the fact that the famous Russian winter was no friend of theirs. In the tropical jungle, guerrillas are sheltered by a perpetual screen of dense foliage, which coun-terguerrillas have sought, with limited success, to eliminate chemically. Winter naturally defoliated most of the trees and underbrush in the occupied areas of the USSR. At the same time, the snow covering prevented the partisans from concealing their tracks. The frozen swamps and lakes were easily traversed by counterguerrillas. (See Chap. VIII, Sect. Ill, B, 3.) Equally important was the fact that sheer survival in the rigorous climate required the Soviet partisans to devote much of their energies to accumulating food supplies and building shelter. Early directives to the partisans stressed the crucial importance of preparing such

quarters; evidently part of the suffering of the Crimean partisans (an inordinately large proportion of whom were of urban background) was due to the fact that they constructed aboveground shelters resembling teepees.

[See the photograph in Shapko, p. 40.]

In most areas the dugout became at an early stage the standard form of shelter. While uncomfortable, it was liveable; but it greatly restricted the partisans' mobility, and almost forced them to organize in sizable groups capable of beating off all except large-scale attacks. (See especially Chap. III, Sect. II, E.) The type of guerrilla who operates in very small groups, moving constantly, living in the open much of the time, and even able to obtain a portion of his food from the forest, was simply unviable during the Soviet winter.

2. The Military Environment

The effect of climate and terrain was to restrict the area of operation of the partisans and to force them to combine in large groups. If the anti-guerrilla forces had been numerous, well trained, and well equipped, the result might have been elimination of the partisan movement. In fact, however, there has probably never been a guerrilla movement which enjoyed such a fortunate technical position vis-à-vis its opponents as did the Soviet. When the Germans invaded the USSR, they were inferior both in manpower and in quantity of military equipment. The sweeping initial victories were due to a combination of surprise, superior strategy and training (in part the result of the Germans' years of experience in fighting), greater individual initiative, and (to a less marked degree) qualitatively superior equipment. Between approximately July and October 1941 the Germans because of their victories enjoyed a quantitative ascendancy in certain classes of weapons, particularly the air arm. By the beginning of 1942, however, Soviet production, Western aid, and German diversion of forces to other theaters had redressed the balance. By the middle of 1942 the Soviet air force was superior, except over the southern portions of the front; even there the Germans were inferior by 1943. (See Chap. VI, In-trod.) The Germans were so short on tanks and other mechanized equipment that these instruments could rarely be used in quantity against the partisans. Even in small arms, the partisans were often better equipped than the Germans. (See Chap. III, Sect. II, D.)

From the negative point of view, the technical parity between guerrilla and antiguerrilla meant that the Germans could not employ some of the tactics which have proved most effective against guerrillas. From the positive standpoint, it meant that the partisans could use modern techniques of communication and supply on a scale never before or since attained by large guerrilla forces. The basic technological devices employed were the radio and the airplane. Evidently the initial Soviet plan for partisan warfare did not fully envisage the possibilities of either of these instruments. Radio receivers and transmitters were provided, but evidently frequently did not work.

[For an example see *Partizanskiye byli* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Mini-sterstva Oborony SSSR, 1958), p. 128.]

Part of the difficulty no doubt arose from the Soviet expectation that only limited areas would be occupied. Many months after the war had started the available radio equipment was so limited in range that a partisan leader setting off for the western portion of the occupied area was warned that he would lose radio contact with his headquarters.

[Linkov, p. 306.]

Another difficulty—which, of course, affected other types of equipment as well—was that the catastrophic decline in Soviet industrial capacity in 1941 made it simply impossible to turn out sufficient equipment for the partisans.

[Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1941-1945,* éd. P. N. Pospelov *et al.* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR) [hereafter cited as *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny]* III (1961), 357, states that in 1943 the growth of war production made it possible to supply the partisans with munitions and supplies such as means of communication. An officer of the Belorussian Staff of the Partisan Movement writes that in August 1942 K. Ye. Voroshilov (then nominal head of the entire partisan movement) told him that unfortunately, the regime could not supply the partisans adequately; the officer comments that the supplies which the staff could send (including, specifically, means of communication) were quite insufficient. Akademii Nauk Belorusskoi SSR, Institut Istorii, *Iz istorii partizanskogo dvizheniya* v *Belorussii (1941-1944 gody): Sbornik vospominanii* (Minsk: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo BSSR, 1961) [hereafter cited as *Iz istorii partizanskogo dvizheniya* v *Belorussii],* p. 113.]

As late as midsummer 1942 the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement (the principal headquarters) was in radio contact with only 10 per cent of the partisan groups. By mid-November of that year, however, it had got in touch with 20 per cent, and many more were in radio contact with lower-level control centers.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* II (1961), 487.]

By the first of the year there were 424 radio transmitters in partisan groups, connecting the Central Staff with 1,131 detachments.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV (1962), 468.]

Even at that date, however, there were numerous partisan units in the western occupied regions which were still not in regular contact with any control center.

The positive effect on partisan morale of being in contact with the unoccupied parts of the country was enormous. Possession of a radio was a major factor in enabling certain partisan commanders to assume control over neighboring partisan groups. It also convinced the local population that the partisan commander represented authority, and enabled him to carry on effective propaganda activities based on Moscow reports. (See Chap. IV, Sect. I, B, 5.)

A partisan staff which had a radio station was, in the eyes of the population, an official organ of Soviet power, and a detachment commander with whom Moscow dealt was an official representative of the Soviet state for both partisans and population, its plenipotentiary in the occupied territory. Personally, I consider that the very greatest service of the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement during that time [late 1942-early 1943] was the organization of widely ramified radio connections between Moscow and the population of the temporarily occupied regions.

[M. I. Naumov, *Khinelskiye pokhody* (Kiev: Derzhavne Vydavnytstvo Khudozhnoï Literatury, 1960), p. 373.]

It is hard to distinguish the importance of radio as an isolated factor, because in practice its use was almost inseparable from another typically modern military device—the airplane. Together the two devices enabled the partisan command to reinvigorate the partisan movement and to

weld it into a centrally directed instrument of Soviet military and political strategy. The quantitative importance of air contact is somewhat difficult to assess because the nature of the front lines made it possible to establish surface contact between the unoccupied territory and the partisans to a far greater extent than is usual in guerrilla operations. The "Vitebsk corridor" which led through the German lines into northern Belorussia from the end of 1941 until 1943; the "Kirov corridor" opening into the northern Bryansk area during a considerably shorter period; and the "Ovruch corridor" into the northwestern Ukraine during the winter of 1943-44 were the most important of these gaps. For all partisan groups during certain periods, and for most of them at all times, however, air was the only available physical contact with the "Great Land," as they called the unoccupied USSR. As is pointed out in Chapter VI (Sect. II, A, 3, a), where the problems of air support are discussed in detail, the proportion of the partisans' arms which had been supplied by air actually increased as the war went on, from perhaps one-fourth in early 1942 to half in the summer of 1944. If radio could transmit information and orders to the partisan commanders, only air could supply them with especially trained personnel— and bring in the inspectors and "trouble shooters" of the central command who made sure that the individual partisan commanders remained fully responsive to the regime's demands. The visible evidence of higher concern for the partisans which air contact provided was probably even more important to partisan morale than was radio contact. (See Chap. Ill, Sect. II, C.) While provision of supplies, other than weapons, explosives, and technical devices such as radios, was not a quantitatively important aspect of air support, the possibility of supplying food to the partisans in emergencies gave the latter a margin of staying power which occasionally meant the difference between survival and near annihilation. What complete absence of air supply could mean was demonstrated in the Crimea when German air superiority combined with excessive distances from Soviet airfields (after the surrender of the fortress of Sevastopol the nearest bases were in the Caucasus) completely severed air contact for four months in the winter and spring of 1942-43.

[Makedonskii, p. 82.]

The partisans were admittedly reduced to eating the meat of horses dead since autumn, and, according to German reports, to cannibalism.

[*Ibid.,* p. 64; AOK 11, Ic, Report No. 40 (GMDS, AOK 11, 35774/15).]

It is true that air support had some negative effects on the partisans; mobility was sometimes reduced by the need to build and guard airfields and to wait for planes. Apparently a delay resulting from the desire to keep a rendezvous with planes was a major factor in the near destruction of M. I. Naumov's group, one of the most important.

[Pavlo P. Vershigora, *Reid na San i Vislu* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Mini-sterstva Oborony SSSR, 1960), p. 226.]

On the whole, however, these liabilities were minor. Perhaps the most striking evidence of Soviet recognition of the importance of air and radio contact with the partisans is the fact that the principal "Republic" partisan headquarters were located near Moscow, rather than closer to the groups they directed, in order to utilize the superior radio transmission and air base facilities of the Moscow area.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 331.]

C. THE PARTISAN RESPONSE

Much of the misunderstanding of the Soviet partisan movement which has often been evident in works otherwise characterized by profound scholarship and keen judgment has arisen from the paucity of information about this aspect of the war in the USSR and from the peculiar objectives and environment which affected the partisans. Even more confusing, probably, has been the fact that the Soviet partisan movement did not develop uniformly. Instead, there were three distinct stages of partisan activity; the first stage was so different from succeeding stages that one can almost characterize it as a separate episode in the history of guerrilla warfare.

1. The First Stage: June-December 1941

The first stage of partisan activity was based on the plan referred to in subsection A above. It is unnecessary to describe the highly schematic organization which the plan envisaged, since this topic is treated in detail in Chapter II (Sect. I, B). One need only note that essentially it provided for the uniform distribution of small partisan units throughout the administrative subdivisions of the occupied territory. The apparent disregard for the importance of terrain features may have been due in part to a misreading of the Chinese experience. It was also based on the erroneous assumption that partisan activity would be restricted to a relatively small area of enemy occupation during a comparatively brief period of time. Given the rapidity of the German advance and the preoccupation of the Soviet leadership with other problems, it is scarcely surprising that the original plan could not be fundamentally altered during 1941. Moreover, it had certain politically attractive features (see Chap. II, Sect. IV) which evidently led the regime to retain this form of organization wherever feasible. The most serious erroneous assumption, however, was that the territorial partisan detachment could rely on intimate clandestine contacts with the local population. The core of the partisans was to be "full-time"— they were to live together in the forest rather than concealing themselves as individuals in the villages after operations. However, the partisans were to have important clandestine auxiliaries among peasants enlisted for brief raids. Furthermore, some partisan groups, at least, anticipated that they could dispose of their wounded by leaving them in the care of the villagers.

[S. Gnyedash, *Volya k zhizni* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1960), p. 49.]

Obviously, had these assumptions been accurate the partisan detachments could have remained small, flexible, and (within their limited areas of assignment) highly mobile. But these assumptions in turn presupposed a degree of unanimous support among the local population which the Soviet partisans rarely ever obtained, and were very far from securing in 1941. Probably the single most important development affecting the partisans in that year was the profound lack of popular support for the Soviet system following the massive German victories. The bulk of the population of the occupied regions was convinced that the Soviet system had proved weak, and would not be re-established. One need not stop here to estimate the extent to which the population welcomed this development; clearly a majority were willing to acquiesce in it. Even in this majority some helped the partisans because they, too, were "Russian men" (frequently, just "men," "our men," or, rarely, "Ukrainian men"). The partisans never lacked enough supporters to provide good intelligence on enemy activities. But the Germans were also able to secure volunteer informants on a large scale, both from sincere opponents of the Soviet system and from opportunists. While their success was highest in 1941, even later in most rural areas counterguerrillas continued to get a great deal of information. For example, one partisan recounts how he was forced to transport his dying comrade twelve miles because, although there were no German troops in the numerous villages along the way, he knew that if he stayed in one for more than a few hours he would be reported to the occupation authorities.

[*Partizanskaya borba . . . na territorii Smolenshchiny,* p. 274.]

Under these circumstances, while partisans could get some assistance from friendly villagers, the units had to be practically self-sufficient.

The isolation of the 1941 partisans was enhanced by the fact that most of them were "shareholders" of the Soviet system rather than average citizens. A very high proportion consisted of city men or men who had held managerial or clerical jobs in the countryside; few were peasants. The Party and NKVD affiliations of the leaders and many of the rank and file did not endear them to the typical rural citizen. (See Chap. II, Sect. II, A, and Chap. Ill, Sect. I, A, 5.) While these circumstances made it more difficult for the early partisan movement to attain popular support, they did endow it with a fairly high degree of group cohesion and loyalty to the regime. Moreover, the German policy of shooting known Communists left these "shareholders" with little choice. But, in spite of the effort to enlist "Old Bolsheviks" with conspiratorial experience, the apparatus men lacked adequate training as well as familiarity with the local terrain. Perhaps even more important, they lacked something which only time can give a new guerrilla movement—the benefit of the process of "natural selection" by which those who are psychologically unfitted for guerrilla life are eliminated or at least removed from command positions.

The result of these deficiencies can be stated succinctly. The original partisan units suffered enormous losses; in many areas, especially the hostile West Ukraine, they vanished without a trace. Practically nothing of military significance was accomplished. The remnants of the groups hid in the forests or villages, or escaped to the Red Army lines. In Stalino (now Donetsk) oblast, for example, an unpublished Soviet source admits that many underground and partisan members deserted or even went over to the Germans. Others evacuated to the Soviet side of the front without permission; in a single rayon such evacuees comprised twenty-seven of thirty-three assigned to underground work. After the war some of these men invented stories of fictitious partisan detachments to justify their behavior. In May 1942 it was necessary to create an entirely new "parallel underground obkom."

[A. D. Kholodenin, "Kommunisticheskaya partiya—vdokhnovitel i organizator borby trudyashchikhsya stalinskoi oblasti protiv nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov (oktyabr 1941—sentyabr 1943 g.)," unpublished dissertation, Kiev State University, 1956, pp. 42-48. While reticent about the reasons, a recent Soviet publication also admits that it was necessary to form a "parallel underground" organization in Stalino oblast. Yu. P. Petrov, "Kommunisticheskaya partiya—organizator i rukovoditel partizanskogo dvizheniya v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny," *Voprosy Istorii,* 1958. No. 5, p. 27.]

A recent Soviet memoir sums up the situation fairly bluntly when it states that the extensive but short-lived partisan activity (in Kiev oblast) in the late summer of 1941 was a "prologue to the organization and carrying out of partisan war in the Ukraine."

[Begma and Kyzya, p. 49.]

2. The Second Stage: December 1941—Autumn 1942

The opening of the second stage, which was characterized by the development of what almost amounted to a new partisan movement, was signalled by the repulse of the German attack on Moscow. This was not merely a check, but a defeat of great magnitude. Although the German forces were able by a narrow margin to avert a catastrophic rout, the ability of the Red Army to fight again on at least equal terms was evident. The majority of the population in the occupied territories was no longer sure that the Soviet system was finished. The average man no longer

had to think in terms of permanent accommodation to German rule, however harsh it might be; and he might find it very unsafe to make that accommodation if the Soviet power returned.

It is ironic that the earlier German victories themselves had been partly responsible for a situation in which this drastic shift of public opinion

could provide the basis for a revived partisan movement. Millions of Soviet soldiers had been cut off behind the enemy lines during the summer and early autumn. Most were rounded up by the Germans. While many (mostly of Ukrainian origin) were then released, hundreds of thousands were callously left to starve in barbed-wire enclosures. As rumors of this treatment spread, soldiers remaining at large tried desperately to avoid capture. Countless thousands settled down in the villages and tried to sink out of sight. Those who could not do this hid in the forests and swamps. There they formed bands for self-protection and mutual support in obtaining food. The presence of these spontaneously formed bands is the grain of truth behind the myth, widely disseminated in postwar *émigré* circles, that the partisan movement was really a spontaneous Russian national uprising against the German occupation. In fact, the "spontaneous" bands were concerned almost wholly with survival. What attacks they carried out were against local German auxiliaries in the villages, and were designed to secure food.

In any event, most of the drifting groups of Red Army men soon came under control of representatives of the regime. Like the apparatus "shareholders," political workers of the Red Army (commissars and politruks) were proscribed by the Germans; consequently, they had no choice but to remain loyal to the Soviet regime. Many Red Army officers also felt bound to the system. As long as the outlook for the Soviet regime seemed hopeless, these men could do little to activate the bands of soldiers for concerted action against the Germans. Indeed, many of the officers and commissars themselves sank into apathy. The prospects of eventual Soviet victory raised by the German defeats of December 1941 galvanized the hard-core supporters of the system into activity; at times even minor Red Army successes (see Chap. VII, Sect. I, A) had this effect. Usually the hard-core elements were able to gain ascendancy over the lower or less resolute elements of the cut-off Red Army men. Very often the Red Army officers were assisted by remnants of the territorial partisan organizations.

The process just described was restricted to the northern forest and swamp region: Belorussia, the Bryansk forest, and the more northerly parts of the occupied Russian Republic (RSFSR). At this point there were practically no partisans in the Ukraine or the RSFSR steppe provinces, for the Germans had rapidly swept up cut-off Red Army elements there. From the immediate military standpoint, however, the embryonic partisans were very well placed, for they were astride the German communications to the principal battlefields. Consequently, despite its other preoccupations, the regime (operating largely through Red Army commands and the attached political sections) devoted enormous efforts to organizing, supplying, and bringing under central control the scattered and loosely structured soldier-partisans. Here radio and air contact were utilized to the greatest extent possible. Teams sent in by parachute or through the "corridors" contacted the partisans, superseded unreliable commanders, and brought about the subordination of others to Moscow.

The partisan detachments which, by the summer of 1942, were the result of the process just described were far larger than the units of under two hundred which the territorial scheme had envisaged. In general, the partisan group (which we may refer to generically as a "brigade") ranged in size from 350 to 2,000 men. (See Chap. II, Sect. Ill, B, for the factors which determined this size.) In contrast to the territorial detachment, the brigade was not necessarily

restricted to a single administrative subdivision, and in fact many partisan groups moved from time to time. In general however, their movements were infrequent, the result of necessity rather than plan. If the unit happened to be favorably located in relation to German communications, its operations could be fairly effective. Even in these circumstances, however, only a small proportion of the available manpower was effectively employed at a given time. (See Chap. Ill, Sect. II, C.) There was a general tendency to avoid very risky or strenuous operations, for the partisans, after a period of extreme hardship, had by this time attained a status of relative security and well-being. Since they were mostly former soldiers recruited over large areas of the USSR, few had permanent local attachments; but many formed liaisons with local women. These ties further reduced the partisans' inclination to bring down German vengeance upon "their" areas. Consequently, the revived partisan movement, while impressive in numbers and in extent of territory controlled or influenced, represented a heavy investment of manpower in proportion to military accomplishments. At the same time, since the partisans were restricted to areas of favorable terrain, their only effect on most of the occupied area was to demonstrate that Soviet power could not be permanently excluded.

3. The Third Stage: Autumn 1942—Summer 1944

It is obvious that the state of affairs just described was not fully satisfactory to the Soviet regime. It had devoted considerable effort toward reviving the partisan movement and had invested scarce trained manpower and matériel. In return it had obtained a powerful political instrument (discussed in Sect. Ill) and a measure of disruption of German communications. More was desired, particularly since the numerical strength of the partisan movement constantly grew.

The measures taken by the Soviet regime were of two kinds. First, wherever possible partisan detachments were forced to intensify their attacks on German communications. The resulting German counterattacks stirred up the partisans, and forced them to abandon their sedentary life. The "family attachments" were disrupted. The result, in the Belorussian and northern RSFSR regions, was a certain intensification of partisan activity, but the amount of armed conflict remained limited in comparison to the very large number of men involved. In the south, a somewhat different course was taken. The partisans in the Bryansk forest region were in an exceptionally strategic location, close to major German military positions. By the end of 1942, with the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, German withdrawal was evidently only a matter of time. The location of the partisans would then cease to be strategic in relation to the German army. On the other hand, the Bryansk forest also occupied an especially strategic position in regard to the occupied Ukraine. It was close to the northern limit of the east Ukrainian steppe (there being a transitional zone, or forest-steppe, in between). In addition, a route sheltered by scattered forests led all the way from Bryansk to the Dnepr River. Beyond the river lay the great forests of the northwest Ukraine, which up to then had been practically undisturbed by partisans. The Bryansk forest was envisaged, therefore, as a gigantic base, or *place d'armes,* from which to extend partisan activities to new regions.

[*Fartizanskiye byli,* p. 253.]

The plan of activity of the Ukrainian partisans (practically all of whom were then located in the southern fringes of the Bryansk forest) called for their transfer to the west and southwest during 1943.

Implementation of this most important assignment involved serious difficulties, especially in areas which had few forests or were steppe; and these constituted the larger part of the territory of the Ukraine. They could be overcome by sending strong, well-armed unifications, provided with all necessary supplies, from the northern, forested areas of the Ukraine to the right bank of

the Dnepr and farther to the south and southwest in the areas where the most important communications of the enemy army were located. Just this assignment was given by the Party leaders in the Kremlin on 2 September 1942 to the commanders of the two strongest Ukrainian partisan unifications—S. A. Kovpak and A. N. Saburov. Their unifications were to open the route to the west, the Right-Bank Ukraine, for the movement of other powerful partisan unifications.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 475.]

These "roving bands" were a distinctive feature of the last phase of partisan warfare. Taking advantage of the German disorganization and extreme scarcity of troops and equipment after the defeat at Stalingrad, they moved as units for hundreds of miles. Usually the "roving bands" kept to the forest. The partisan headquarters exerted considerable efforts to get the "roving bands" to penetrate the steppe, but even these partisan "shock troops" hesitated as a rule to move into the open country south of the Kiev-Rovno railroad.

[Vershigora, *Reid,* pp. 106-108.]

A major exception was M. I. Naumov's mounted brigade, but its experience was not altogether encouraging. The brigade left the Bryansk area in February 1943, swung south to the Dnepr (which it crossed on the ice near Cherkassy), and traversed much of the southwestern Ukrainian steppe before being nearly wiped out in a wood west of Kiev. Of 1,400 men who started the raid, barely 300 escaped to the deep forest on the northern fringe of the Ukraine some miles west of the Dnepr. There Naumov and his cadre of survivors played a part in developing the partisan movement in the forested northwest Ukraine.

More important in this transplanting of the partisan movement to almost virgin territory were the brigades under S. A. Kovpak and A. N. Saburov, which went from Bryansk directly across the middle reaches of the Dnepr where it flows from Belorussia into the Ukraine. These partisan groups were followed by others until by the summer of 1943 the whole northwestern Ukrainian forest, east of Volhynia, was a new partisan stronghold. On the whole, the military accomplishments of these incursions were limited; but they had enormous political influence, as will appear later. Moreover, in 1944, the roving bands constituted a ready instrument for extending the Soviet partisan movement into neighboring countries.

D. ANTIGUERRILLA WARFARE

1. Infiltrators

Postwar experience, particularly in Malaya and the Philippines, has shown that one of the most effective antiguerrilla techniques is the use of small units of highly trained men who infiltrate the forests where guerrillas are established. The counterguerrillas have the support of all the technical instruments of modern warfare, but they move in a random pattern in order to avoid breaches of security which might warn the guerrillas of their approach. Their attacks have a disruptive and demoralizing effect on all the guerrillas in the area of operation; but the prime targets are the leadership cadres of the guerrilla movement.

Occasionally the Germans employed this type of tactic with great success. The "Graukopf" unit, composed almost entirely of Russians, combined deception with infiltration. It played a significant part in disrupting the large partisan concentration in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area although the latter was eventually destroyed by other methods. (See Chap. VII, Sect. V, A, 2.) There were a few similar instances. To some extent, Bronislaw Kaminsky's collaborator

organization in the southern Bryansk region employed infiltration tactics. Small units of Crimean Tatars, supported by German and Axis troops, harried the Soviet partisans in the Yaila Mountains. The Ukrainian nationalist partisans (generally without German support), fought a truly bilateral guerrilla war against Soviet Partisans in the northwestern Ukrainian forests.

It is notable that in all these instances the burden of the counterguerrilla operations was borne by indigenous units, with the Germans playing at most a directing and supporting role. Recent experiences have demonstrated that counterguerrilla infiltrators need not be local men; but obviously strangers require a longer period of training and familiarization with the terrain. The Germans lacked the time and resources to become good infiltrators themselves. They were never willing permanently to divert even moderate numbers of first-rate troops to antiguerrilla warfare. In view of the terrible manpower shortage at the front, the German position is understandable. Yet only very vigorous, adaptable young men can stand the rigors of the infiltration type of counterguerrilla fighting. Older men, who predominated in the German security troops, were not only physically limited but had an inordinate dread of the dark forests. If the Germans had been willing to recruit Soviet citizens early in the war, they might have developed many effective units like those described in the preceding paragraph. But by the time Hitler's injunction against giving arms to the "inferior" Slavs was somewhat relaxed or evaded, there was too little time for the careful preparation which successful infiltration requires. The partisans were too well entrenched; and the loss of morale among the anti-Soviet elements in the population of the occupied regions made it difficult to secure the high quality recruits required. Moreover, the special nature of Soviet partisan warfare would have made the infiltration technique somewhat dubious as the major tactic of the counterguerrillas. The large partisan brigades could have been harried, but they could not have been wiped out by small infiltration units. In addition, lacking air support or superior weapons the infiltrators' advantage over partisan units of equal size would have been much reduced.

2. Strongpoints, Encirclement, and Combing

The principal antiguerrilla tactics actually employed by the Germans were a combination consisting of maintenance of strongpoints to guard vital roads and railroads plus periodical large-scale efforts to reduce the partisan forces by encircling and combing their forest strongholds. The first tactic was purely defensive, but it went a considerable way toward attaining the Germans' prime objective of keeping the partisans from seriously affecting the German war effort against the main Soviet military forces. In the northern, economically unproductive regions the Germans did not greatly care what happened in the areas away from the towns, highways, and railroads, so long as the latter remained secure. The towns were garrisoned by security troops, who set up posts at intervals along the roads. Small mobile units periodically patrolled the roads, or went to the assistance of strongpoints under attack. Ordinarily these defensive measures, combined with a very efficient system of repair, were adequate to keep open the lines of communication. The measures could not prevent isolated breaks in the highway and railroad system, nor could they (in 1943 and 1944) avert sudden concerted traffic interference over a wide area, but they could prevent protracted interdiction of movement.

The Germans were, of course, concerned with the potential of the partisans for disrupting traffic at a crucial moment of a campaign. Consequently, the German command recognized the need for some offensive action to restrict the development of the partisans' strength. The tactic of encirclement and combing constituted the principal German response to this need. Large numbers of military units surrounded a forested area where partisans were based. When all the assigned units were in place, they began moving concentrically toward a point within the area, destroying all partisans whom they encountered. Theoretically, if the circle was kept intact and the area was carefully searched, there would be no partisans left when the operation was over.

Where the surrounding troops were very numerous, the area to be covered small, and the partisans weak or inexperienced, the tactic occasionally worked. (See Chap. XI.) It also worked in one instance (the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area) where the partisans were numerous and strong. There an important factor seemed to be the conventional military qualities of the partisan organization, which had been reinforced by large numbers of regular Red Army troops. The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh partisans were so successful, well equipped, and trained in standard military operations that they played the Germans' game by standing and fighting. The partisans inflicted heavy losses on the Germans, but were wiped out themselves. It is notable that the partisan movement was never substantially revived in this area. (See Chap. VII.) Occasionally in later years the Germans caught considerable partisan groups like Naumov's and Kovpak's in open or inhospitable areas where they could be destroyed or almost destroyed by encirclement tactics. In the deep forests and swamps of the main partisan areas of operation, however, it was almost always possible for at least the hard core of encircled partisans to break through a weak point in the necessarily thin line of encirclement and to escape to nearby forest areas.

The German tactic, therefore, rarely eliminated many partisan units or leaders, and the rank and file could always be replaced. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the tactic was ill-chosen. It disrupted the partisans' build-up and planning; drastically weakened their morale, especially when it deprived them of their winter shelter, food reserves, and air contacts; and temporarily reduced the threat to the communication lines, The tactic took advantage of the weaknesses inherent in the partisans' reliance on fixed camps and airfields; it also utilized certain strengths in the German position. While the Germans were unwilling to assign more than a restricted number of second-rate security troops to permanent antiguerrilla warfare, they could at times afford to detach sizable numbers front-line troops for brief operations. The Yelnya operation, which was exceptionally large and protracted, utilized two army corps for about two months. In the late spring of 1943 a force of about the same size was used for some weeks in the northern Bryansk area. Since the troops employed received no special training, the net loss of time was not much greater than the period of the operation itself. Similarly, enough airplanes for observation purposes could be obtained for relatively brief operations at times when front demands were not high.

3. Anticivilian Operations

Given the objective of security of communications rather than pacification of the country, the combination of tactics the Germans employed was not in itself a bad means of reducing partisan damage with minimum resources. The German tactics meant, however, practically abandoning the population of the partisan-held areas and the "twilight" zones adjoining them. Assuming that the Germans were willing to pay this price, they would probably have been wiser, even from a strictly military point of view, to have disturbed the helpless civilian population as little as possible during the course of antiguerrilla operations. In the remarkably successful Yelnya operation, civilians were in fact treated with consideration. Most of the time, however, the German counterguerrillas took the position that the civilians, since they had supplied the partisans with food and information, ought to be punished. The Germans also imagined that by destroying agricultural production they would starve the partisans. Consequently, horrible atrocities were committed against the civilian population, including the elderly, women, and children. Village-burning was the main feature of most of the combing operations. In addition, the Germans rounded up all able-bodied younger men and women for the Ostarbeiter program of labor in Germany. The combined effect of these measures was to turn neutral elements of the population toward the partisans, and particularly to send them a constant flow of new recruits seeking to escape the Ostarbeiter program. Theoretically, the Germans might have succeeded in isolating the partisans by complete evacuation of the areas where they could operate; but the size of the areas and populations involved, the difficulty of the terrain, and the strength of the

partisans themselves made such a "solution" impossible. The inhumane half-measures completed the alienation of the population from the Germans, and considerably eased the Soviet problem of regaining popular support.

4. Local Defense

An antiguerrilla tactic of some effectiveness is the arming of the local population for self-defense against the demands of the bands. Given the objectives of the Germans, this could have been at best only a secondary tactic. Where strongly anti-Soviet elements collaborated with the Germans, as in Kaminsky's Lokot district of Bryansk or in the Yaila Mountains, village self-defense was combined with antiguerrilla infiltration at a fairly early stage. Slightly later, the Germans began to arm auxiliary native police *(Ordnungsdienst)* in the villages. These played a significant part in the continued maintenance of order in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh areas. (See Chap. VII, Sect. V, C, 2.) Generally the police units were too poorly armed and too low in morale to be effective, but the "Wehrdoerfer" (fortified villages) introduced in some areas in 1944 were occasionally successful in beating off partisan attacks.

E. EVALUATION: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT AS AN INSTRUMENT OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

Once again it is essential to emphasize that it is impossible to separate the political from the military aspects of any guerrilla operation. The preceding pages make it abundantly clear that there was a constant interaction between the military and the political environment in which the partisans operated; and that both their and the Germans' military operations inevitably had political repercussions. It is possible for analytic purposes, however, to distinguish the effect of partisan operations, both military and political, upon the outcome of the war from the longer-range effect of these operations upon the Soviet system. In the following subsection we shall try to determine what effect the partisans had upon the relative strength of the belligerents.

1. Disruption of Communications

The principal initial task which the Soviet regime set for the partisans was to disrupt German communications with the front, and (as the quotation in subsection A, 3, above indicates) this objective was emphasized throughout the war. As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, German countermeasures prevented complete severance of any vital roads. From the summer of 1942 on, partisan attacks, while they did not imperil the German front, slowed down supply and troop movements, created a tight margin in supplies, and acted as a drain on rolling stock. Occasionally (as at Drissa, northwest of Polotsk), the partisan attacks put a major bridge out of action. Special campaigns of widespread disruption of communications were coordinated with Red Army operations. One of these was directed in the spring of 1943 at the main railway to Bryansk when the Germans were building up their forces for their last major offensive ("Citadel"). The ensuing postponement of the offensive may have played some part in its complete failure. Similarly, the partisans aided the Red Army counteroffensive which immediately followed the German repulse by a concerted attack on the railways during the night of 3-4 August 1943. The great Belorussian offensive of the Red Army the following summer was preceded by a concerted partisan attack which resulted in nine thousand attempted demolitions. The resulting temporary paralysis of rail communications greatly impeded German mobility.

[Hermann Teske, *Die silbernen Spiegel: Generalstabsdienst unter der Lupe* (Heidelberg: Vowinckel, 1952), pp. 210-225.]

While it is unlikely that any of these demolition campaigns fundamentally altered the strategic balance, they were certainly factors of some significance. Given the fact that the Soviet forces could never attain the degree of air supremacy necessary to interdict German movement, the partisan operations were a valuable supplement, and occasionally were employed deliberately as a substitute for air strikes.

2. Combat Support of the Red Army

Like all irregular forces, the Soviet partisans were designed for harassing operations rather than full-scale combat with regular troops. Apparently realizing this, the Soviet command did not often order the partisans to engage in direct attacks on the rear areas of German troops in front-line positions. Such attacks would have had the maximum short-range military impact; but they would have been one-time affairs, for the partisans taking part in them would almost inevitably have been destroyed. Under special circumstances, however, partisan units were employed as battle auxiliaries for the Red Army. During the German coun-teroffensive at Zhitomir in November 1943 several large partisan units acted as a shield for the withdrawal of the regular Soviet forces by covering their right flank in the forests and swamps of the southern Pripet region.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 491.]

Direct partisan participation in Red Army offensives was apparently less successful. The strong concentration of partisans and Red Army troops in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area was partly the result of a Soviet attempt to cut off a major portion of the German Army Group Center in front of Moscow. The attempt failed, and the partisans were eventually destroyed. Partisans did help hold some of the salients (at Kirov and Vitebsk) driven into the German lines during the winter of 1941-42, and later occasionally assisted the Red Army in river crossings. But the over-all results of direct partisan participation in battle were meager.

3. Intelligence

The role of the partisans in obtaining information of military importance was undoubtedly greater, but hard to assess. As was pointed out earlier, the original plan did not call for the partisans to play a significant role in intelligence-gathering. Throughout the war the Soviet regime maintained a number of clandestine networks of informants in the occupied regions. Some of these doubtless remained completely independent of the partisans. Many clandestine agents, however, came to use the partisan base as a refuge when they were in danger of being arrested by the Germans, or perhaps just for temporary respite from the constant strain to which the hunted spy is subject. Even where the clandestine agent did not actually go to the partisans, the knowledge that there was an emergency refuge much closer than the Soviet front must have improved his morale. Besides, the partisans provided the more tangible advantage of a direct radio link with Soviet headquarters through which intelligence could be transmitted and instructions received. Probably the desire to provide for rapid transmission of intelligence data was an important reason for the stress (see B, 2, above) placed on equipping partisan units with radio. The partisans contributed more directly to the intelligence service by building up their own network of informants, often designed primarily to keep the guerrillas aware of enemy plans concerning themselves, but useful for general intelligence purposes. In the late stages of the war, partisans were even able to tap German telephone lines. All of these intelligence services were undoubtedly highly useful to the Soviet war effort, especially since the Red Army does not appear to have been as skilled at using radio monitoring to detect enemy concentrations and battle plans as were the Germans.

4. Economic Disruption

The Germans relied heavily upon the economic output of the occupied territories, especially for the support of their armies in the field. If the partisans had substantially diminished production, they would have inflicted serious injury on the war effort. In fact, however, the areas in which the partisans operated were the least significant from the economic standpoint. The partisans prevented the Germans from collecting foodstuffs in Belorussia and the adjoining Great Russian provinces throughout much of the war; from 1943 on, they disturbed food collection in the northern Ukraine. These regions, however, were traditionally food-deficit areas; their poor, leached soils could not even support the indigenous population. Even if they had been completely undisturbed the Germans could have wrung from this impoverished land only a small portion of the grain, meat, and dairy products which they planned to extort from the occupied territory. The really important food surpluses were in the southern and central Ukraine and the occupied black-earth provinces of the RSFSR (most of which, apart from Kursk and the Crimea, were held by the Germans for only a short time). The partisans could do little to disrupt food procurement in these steppe regions. Available statistics on German food collection suggest that at least until 1943 the grain delivery quotas were largely fulfilled, mostly from Ukrainian production. Quotas for meat and dairy products were not fully met; partisan activity played some part in causing these deficiencies, but peasant subterfuge, direct (unaccounted) requisitioning by German troop units, and such material shortages as insufficient fodder were probably more important.

[Wirtschaftsstab Ost, Chefgruppe Landwirtschaft, "Geschichte des Wirtschafts-stabes" July-October 1944 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.1345), particularly tables Ia, II, and IV; GMDS files Wi/ID 2.1375 and H3/510; these data diverge from the less reliable but stimulating discussion in Karl Brandt, ed., *Management of Agriculture and Food in the German-Occupied and Other Areas of Fortress Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), pp. 128-133.]

The mining and metallurgical industries were also almost entirely concentrated in the southern steppe, in the Donbas and Dnepropetrovsk centers. If the partisans could have disrupted the procurement of manganese, in particular, they might have dealt a serious blow to German industry, but (as described in Chap. XI) the partisan detachments in the vicinity of the manganese mines were easily and quickly eliminated. In the extreme western Ukraine, Kovpak's roving band attempted to destroy the important Galician oil field, but without notable success. Industry, too, was largely concentrated in the steppe cities. Even the secondary manufacturing centers in the cities of Belorussia and the Bryansk area were sufficiently well garrisoned to be secure from partisan attack. Fanatical Nazi crimes like the brutal kidnapping of labor for German plants, the systematic starvation of urban populations by prevention of food deliveries, and the murder of hundreds of thousands of skilled Jewish craftsmen were far larger factors in disrupting manufacturing than anything the partisans did.

Apparently the most serious effect of partisan activities on nonagricul-tural production was interference with lumber production. Obviously, the sources of timber were also the areas of intense partisan activity. The partisans destroyed or captured many of the small sawmills in the Pripet and Bryansk areas, and interrupted the floating of logs on the Pripet, Berezina, Dnepr, and Sosh Rivers. By August 1943 the Germans were deprived of about 80 per cent of the logs and sawed timber they needed in the Ukraine, while half of the Belorussian sawmills were destroyed and 44 per cent of the timber quota remained uncut. Over-all in 1943 the partisans reduced logging operations by about 35 per cent and sawing by 42 per cent. The interference with timber cutting had an important indirect effect on coal production, for the Donbas mines could not be worked properly without an adequate supply of pit props.

[Statement by Paul Pleiger, Delegate for Coal in the Occupied Areas (Rosenberg to Hitler, 9 April 1943, Centre de Documentation Juive Internationale, Paris CXLIV-442).]

5. Matériel and Manpower Investment

Thus far, the evaluation of partisan accomplishments indicates that the material damage they inflicted upon the German war effort and the material assistance that they rendered to the Soviet war effort were significant but far from spectacular. Before completing the balance sheet of material accomplishments, however, one must consider the costs to the Soviet system of these accomplishments, and the drain upon German resources resulting from the antiguerrilla measures required to limit partisan achievements.

The German diversion of matériel to antiguerrilla operations was inconsiderable. The Germans simply did not use any considerable number of armored vehicles or other very scarce weapons. Even the German security troops were poorly armed; and the locally recruited auxiliary units usually were given captured weapons which could not have been effectively used by the German front-line troops. The small number of aircraft assigned to antipartisan missions could nearly always be withdrawn for other uses in an emergency. Soviet matériel investment in the partisans was somewhat more significant. Major partisan headquarters like the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement had small fleets of planes and the Red Army assigned many others for partisan support missions on a temporary basis. (See Chap. VI.) However, these uses of aircraft did not constitute a major drain upon Soviet air power, especially since the Soviet forces were rarely in positions (after the summer of 1942) when air transport was a crucial military requirement. Since there are many indications that the Soviet regime was unable to assign the partisans enough munitions and equipment until late 1942, it is evident that the quantities which were assigned prior to that time constituted some drain on the very limited Soviet resources. As the war went on, the increasing quantities of munitions supplied the partisans were probably relatively less important as drains on Soviet stocks, for Soviet production and the receipt of aid from the Western allies rapidly relieved the initial strain.

The balance of manpower investment is much more significant. By combining German reports and postwar Soviet accounts, it is possible to make fairly adequate estimates of the numerical strength of the Soviet partisans. At the beginning of 1942 there were perhaps as few as 30,000 active partisans in the entire occupied territory. (See Chap. Ill, Sect. II, A.) By summer of that year, however, the number had grown enormously. Of about 150,000, the bulk was certainly in Belorussia and adjoining regions. A Soviet claim that there were 33,000 in the Ukraine in June 1942 is exaggerated, even if one includes the considerable number of Partisans from the Ukraine who had taken refuge on the southern edge of the Bryansk forest.

[M. Suprunenko, *Ukraina* v *velikoi otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1941-1945 gg.* (Kiev: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1956), p. 200.]

Other Soviet sources, however, are much more modest in their estimates. One states that there were 58,000 partisans in Belorussia at the beginning of 1943 and 40,000 in the RSFSR, with a total of 120,000 in all of the occupied territory.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* III, 446.]

Another Soviet work indicates that there were 75,000 "armed" partisans in Belorussia in May 1943 and 20,000 in the Ukraine.

[Petrov, p. 37.]

If anything, the latter figures would suggest a lower total than that based on German reports, which indicated a total of 200,000 partisans in mid-1943. It is probable that the German estimate that the total number declined to about 175,000 as partisan-infested territory was recovered by the Red Army during the following year is accurate. (See Chap. III, Sect. II, A.) German estimates and Soviet accounts tend to agree on the over-all numbers of men ever involved in partisan activity, however. The Soviet figure is 360,000 armed partisans in Belorussia, 220,000 in the Ukraine; allowing for those in the RSFSR and other areas, a grand total of 700,000 is indicated.

[*Ibid.,* p. 42.]

Considering the many factors which necessarily render all estimates of partisan numbers imprecise, the Soviet figure is not seriously at odds with the estimate of 400,000 to 500,000 derived from German reports. Obviously the partisan attrition rate was high; but one cannot tell how much of it was due to actual casualties, and how much to authorized departures or desertions from the partisan units.

The total of perhaps half a million represents a very considerable manpower investment, especially in view of the enormous Soviet military losses and the resulting shortage of military recruits and labor. It is obvious, however, that it is meaningless to use this figure as a basis for appraising the cost of the partisan movement to the Soviet war effort unless the Soviet regime had practical alternative uses for the men engaged in partisan activity. Clearly it was preferable to have men enrolled in the partisans, even if they accomplished nothing, rather than to have them at the disposal of the Germans in the occupied territories. The available evidence suggests that there usually were alternative uses for the partisan manpower. Several Soviet memoirs tell how reliable commanders and political officers dissuaded cut-off groups of Red Army men from trying to make their way back to the Soviet front, insisting that the regime demanded that they carry on the struggle against the enemy as partisans. In the winter of 1941-42 the "corridors" through the front made it relatively easy for men from the main partisan concentrations to go back to the Soviet lines if the regime so desired. As a matter of fact, partisan units in northern Belorussia did recruit and dispatch to the Red Army some 25,000 men.

[*Iz istorii partizanskogo dvizheniya v Belorussii,* p. 460.]

There appears to be no reason why the great majority of the Belorussian partisans could not have been dispatched to regular military service in the same fashion. Even after the gaps in the front lines were closed, the numerous air missions to the partisans could have been used to bring back men. There is no indication that this was done, however, except in the case of seriously wounded partisans. On the contrary, flights to the partisans were utilized to send in a constant, though numerically small stream of highly trained technicians and officers. Consequently, one must conclude that for the most part the Soviet employment of men as partisans was the result of deliberate choice, and therefore can be properly characterized as an investment in unconventional warfare. The great majority of partisans were of military age, and consequently represented a net loss of men available for Red Army service. At the end of the war the total strength of the Soviet military forces was about 10 million. A total of perhaps 15 million to 20 million men were enrolled in the Soviet armed forces at one time or another after the beginning of 1942 (the enormous numbers lost in 1941 have no relevance for our calculation, since there were no options in the use of partisan manpower before the end of that year). Consequently, one may estimate that the partisans absorbed between 2 and 4 per cent of the total available military manpower.

To the extent to which the Soviet manpower in the partisans tied down equivalent German manpower, the investment was clearly justified, regardless of other partisan accomplishments. We can dismiss fantastic Soviet claims of losses inflicted by the partisans on the Germans, although these are still reprinted. For example, it is claimed that the Orel partisans killed 147,835 Germans.

[*Orlovskaya oblast v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny (1941-1945 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Orel: Orlovskoye Knizhnoye Izdatelstvo, 1960), p. 259.]

Actually, total casualties inflicted by partisans in all areas probably did not exceed 35,000; and no more than half of these were German soldiers. A loss of 224 German soldiers in an attack on a troop train stands out in the German reports as an unusually heavy loss. (See Chap. VIII, Sect. III, A, 4.) It is true, on the other hand, that the number of security troops employed in the occupied territories (an average of 200,000 to 250,000 in 1943 and 1944) closely approximates the number of partisans active at the same time. About half of these men were Germans. Superficially, one might conclude that the drain on German-controlled manpower available for the front roughly equalled the drain on Soviet manpower. This was far from the case, however. Any army with long lines of communication in a conquered country must detail a considerable number of troops for security purposes, for, even in the absence of evident armed resistance, it must protect vital connections with its home bases against acts of sabotage or sudden popular uprisings. The Germans were, in fact, exceedingly sparing in assigning units to the lines of communication; in 1941 a single security division protected 250 miles of the main railroad across Belorussia. Undoubtedly the partisan attacks compelled the Germans to increase their security forces to some extent. On the other hand, the Germans could in case of dire need send some of their security troops to the front. At other times (as noted in subsection D above), regular troops could be temporarily withdrawn from the front to reinforce the security troops for special antiguerrilla operations. The Soviet command, on the other hand, had very little flexibility in the short run in the use of partisans to reinforce its front troops or even to reinforce one another. Ordinarily during an antiguerrilla campaign each partisan area constituted an island which the Germans could deal with in isolation.

A second, even more important factor in considering the extent to which counterguerrilla forces constituted a drain on German manpower was the quality of the security troops. Generally the men in these units were too old or physically limited to serve at the front. Twenty to 25 per cent of the security units were detachments stationed in the occupied territories so as to be available for guard duties while completing their ordinary military training. While the use of such units as counterguerrillas may have impeded the training program to some extent, these troops would not generally have been available for front duty in any case.

The Germans also employed considerable numbers of satellite (mainly Slovak, Hungarian, and Rumanian) troops for antipartisan warfare. The training, morale, and equipment of these units were generally so poor that they would have been a liability at the front. Similarly, the large numbers of auxiliary security police recruited from among citizens of the occupied territories would have been of very limited use at the front except for the unlikely possibility (discussed in Sect. II above) that a real anti-Soviet army of citizens of the occupied territories could have been developed early in the war. As it was, if the police had not been needed, its members would simply have formed another contingent of Ostarbeiter, of little significance in the total manpower pool in Germany.

6. The Balance Sheet

On the whole, one must conclude that the resources diverted to antiguerrilla warfare, while tangible, were considerably lower than those which the Soviet regime devoted to the partisans. Since the material accomplishments of the partisans were also very limited, one may question whether the partisan effort was worth the investment from the standpoint of winning the war. When one is dealing with so many incommensurate factors, one cannot, of course, answer this kind of question with finality. There were certain highly intangible ways in which the partisans may have contributed enough to the war effort to make up for their lack of material accomplishments. Their unpredictable attacks lowered German morale, though there is no evidence that the German will to fight was ever seriously impaired. The great accomplishment of the partisans in the psychological field was their major contribution in turning the population of the occupied territories against the Germans. However (as was shown in Sect. I) the Germans did not really seek to gain the loyalty of the population; and if they had it is difficult to see how this loyalty could have affected the course of the war to a decisive extent. One is therefore inclined to conclude that from the narrow standpoint of winning the war the whole partisan effort was dubious. But, as will be shown in the next section, the partisans made a much longer-range political and psychological contribution to the Soviet system.

§III. The Partisans and the Totalitarian System

A. MAINTAINING THE SOVIET PRESENCE

Whatever else the partisans accomplished, they performed one service of incalculable importance for the Soviet system: they maintained the Soviet presence in the occupied territories. Probably even more than other forms of political organization, totalitarian dictatorship requires the maintenance of inflexible habits of compliance to its demands. The totalitarian system may owe its original success to the use of force; but the habit of conformity, insofar as it is conscious, rests upon belief in the omnipotence of the regime far more than upon overt use of violence. Along with the myth of omnipotence goes the myth of the omnipresence of the regime's instruments of control. When, however, the illusion of omnipotence and omnipresence is shattered by military defeat, a totalitarian regime is in greater danger than one which rests upon a higher degree of voluntary consensus. The habits of obedience are shattered. The effect is especially serious if the regime's instrumentalities of control are removed for a considerable length of time, and are replaced for several years by an alien power. Even if the latter is eventually ejected, it takes a long time to rebuild the myth of the omnipotence and omnipresence of the restored totalitarian regime.

The theoretical picture just presented resembles what might have hap-pended to the image of Soviet authority in the territories occupied by Germany for periods ranging from two to three years. Some of the effects described were in fact apparent after the war. The extreme measures taken by Stalin's regime to screen the occupied population and to restore rigid control reflect concern with reinforcing the shaken myths by overt use of violence. There is no doubt, however, that the task of re-establishing Soviet authority was much facilitated by the fact that *this authority never completely vanished from most of the German-occupied territory.* To a considerable extent the remarkable degree to which Soviet authority was preserved was due, directly or indirectly, to the partisans.

At first sight this assertion appears to be incompatible with the conclusion presented in Section II that the partisans were unable to operate in most of the occupied territory. The entire population of the territory occupied for considerable periods by the Germans (leaving out such areas as portions of Moscow oblast and the North Caucasus which were occupied for only a few weeks or months) was about 70 million—approximately two-fifths of the entire prewar Soviet population. Only about 1 per cent of the population in the occupied USSR lived in "partisan territory"; i.e.,

areas which were under firm partisan control except during major antiguerrilla campaigns. Almost all of the latter population lived in isolated areas of Belorussia, the extreme northern edge of the Ukraine, or the northern parts of the occupied RSFSR. A far larger number of persons in the same regions—between 15 million and 20 million—lived in a "twilight" zone subject to physical pressure from both partisans and Germans. In some portions of the twilight zone the Germans succeeded in maintaining a precarious framework of administration. Local men were appointed as starostas (elders) in each village. When volunteers were no longer available, the office was assigned arbitrarily; frequently it was passed around among the heads of households. Sometimes the starosta was assisted by a small native police unit. He was held responsible for the conduct of the village: he was obliged to report all signs of anti-German activity; to see that German proclamations were read; to keep the roads clear of mud and snow; and to bring in the quotas of food and manpower demanded by the Germans. If the starosta was really anti-Soviet, he found that these onerous duties made the population regard him as a German tool. The partisans, who were generally very well informed on the attitudes of village officials, made the anti-Soviet starosta their special target. Hundreds of starostas were killed; when the starosta could not be reached personally the partisans might massacre his family. (See Chap. Ill, Sect. Ill, D.) If, on the other hand, the starosta had been compelled to assume his position, the partisans in turn forced him to become their secret collaborator. Not being as well informed as the partisans, the Germans often did not know of this situation; if they did, the starosta's punishment was summary. And even the starosta who was loyal to the Germans often fell victim to the collective punishment measures meted out during anti-guerrilla campaigns.

The terrible dilemma of the starosta was typical of that faced by anyone who held a position of responsibility under the Germans in the northern rural areas where the partisan "long arm" of the Soviet regime could reach. From 1942 on, the partisans devoted a major effort to making it impossible for any kind of organized administrative or economic life to continue under German authority. The justification advanced by Soviet writers is simple: any collaboration was treason. There are occasional indications that Soviet spokesmen saw the campaign against collaboration precisely as a reaffirmation of the omnipresence of Soviet power. A partisan leader is said to have told a starosta: "There's nowhere to go to get away from us. There is no salvation anywhere on Soviet soil for a traitor, and never will be."

[G. Artozeyev, *Partizanskaya byl* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1956), p. 223.]

The threat was exaggerated, but not vain. Countless collaborator officials fled to the German-garrisoned towns or to the southern steppe regions. There, as described earlier, the partisans could not apply physical pressure. But nearly every city had an active underground of agents of the regime. In Soviet theory the underground was distinct from the partisans, except that the underground Communist Party committees had a certain amount of authority over the partisan units. As was suggested in connection with intelligence operations, this distinction became blurred when the underground needed partisan support. In September 1942 a political section was established in the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement to direct underground propaganda.

[Petrov, p. 29.]

For propaganda and psychological pressure partisans and underground became complementary members of a team. The underground agents distributed pro-Soviet propaganda in areas where the partisans could not go. Often the underground conveyed warnings to individual collaborators. Sometimes threats were followed by assassination, but even if most persons in the occupied areas untouched by partisans did not encounter violence from a Soviet agent, they knew that the regime's secret representatives were in their midst. If, for the moment, the regime could not

maintain its aura of omnipotence, the average citizen of the steppe or the city could not doubt its omniscience. Nor was he unaware of the strength and ubiquity of the partisans in the northern areas, for rumor, whether or not stimulated by Soviet agents, spread and exaggerated the story of partisan activities. Even in the areas most remote from their bases, the partisans helped to maintain the myth of Soviet omnipotence.

The influence of the partisans, direct or indirect, was by no means confined to demonstrating that there could be no alternative to Soviet rule. In every way possible, the partisans sought to re-establish in a positive sense some form of Soviet authority. Their effort was enormously aided by shrewd selectivity in the treatment of the population. The partisans rarely collectively punished a community. (Treatment of very anti-Soviet, non-Russian ethnic groups like the Crimean Tatars may have been an exception, but even there it is not certain that the *partisans* were indiscriminate in their reprisals.) The hard core of anti-Soviet elements was liquidated, opportunistic or apathetic collaborators were humiliated, forced to perform dangerous tasks, but usually given some hope of redemption; ordinary citizens were sternly held to their obligations to the Soviet system, but otherwise were well treated. The partisans did not hesitate to subject the civilian population to terrible risks and hardships when these were thought necessary to further the interests of the regime, but they did not inflict purposeless suffering.

The partisan commander himself was a prime representative of Soviet authority (see the quotation in Sect. II, B, 2, above). His connection with "Moscow" was the sign of continuity in Soviet power; it is worth remarking that many of the parachute team commanders were native Muscovites who so identified themselves among the population. (See Chap. II, Sect. Ill, E.) The commissar (except for a few experimental situations in 1944 the partisans, unlike the Red Army, always retained the commissar system) had charge of propaganda among the population.

[Vershigora, *Reid,* p. 64.]

As soon as possible in areas of secure partisan control, however, the local Party structure was reintroduced. (See Chap, IV, Sect. V, C.) Where feasible, men of military age were drafted for the Red Army. Other aspects of the Soviet system, including the collective farms, were handled in accordance with circumstances and current propaganda requirements. (This subject is discussed in detail in Chap. IV, Sect. VI.) The model approach, however, was complete reintroduction of Soviet institutions.

[See, for example, the Orel *obkom* directive for rebuilding Soviet institutions in *Orlovskaya oblast* v *gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* pp. 220-222.]

B. PRESSURE ON THE PEASANT

In considering the influence of the partisans on the occupied population, one must constantly bear in mind that the direct impact was almost entirely upon rural people. In 1941 the population of the USSR was two-thirds rural; that of Belorussia was nearly four-fifths rural. The peasant was still the dominant element in the Soviet population. The small rural "intelligentsia," composed of petty bureaucrats and semiprofessional men and women was much more likely than the peasant to have evacuated with the Soviet forces. Consequently, the peasants (apart from Red Army stragglers, most of whom had peasant backgrounds) constituted nearly the entire population of the partisan-influenced areas.

The overwhelming majority of the peasants in the areas where the partisans operated were Great Russian or Belorussian. The latter showed few signs of separate national consciousness. The small group of Ukrainian peasants in the extreme northeastern Ukraine and along the southern

fringes of the Pripet marshes also exhibited little national consciousness. The nationality situation was, as noted earlier, entirely different in Volhy-nia and Galicia, as well as among the Tatar peasants of the Yaila Mountains. Leaving the latter groups aside, however, one can say that the peasants affected by the partisans formed a nationally homogeneous Russian mass. They also were homogeneous in social and economic status. The poor lands they inhabited were for the most part adequate only for mixed subsistence farming. As a result, the economic impact of the establishment of kolkhozes (collective farms) was less extreme in these areas than in the rich black-earth districts to the south and southeast. The proportion of peasants classed as "kulaks" (a flexible term ultimately used to cover all who resisted collectivization) was smaller, and the average peasant had less property to lose when the kolkhoz was established. Nevertheless, the peasants were strongly opposed to the collective farm. While the "kulaks" numbered no more than about 5 per cent, they were disproportionately important in economic life of the area, and apparently exerted a strong influence on the other peasants. When the kulaks' property was expropriated and many kulaks deported, the disruptive effect, economic and psychological, was very great.

[By far the best picture of collectivization in these areas is presented in Fainsod, Smolensk under Soviet Rule, Chapter 12. The Smolensk oblast (which during col-lectivization included a much greater extent of the RSFSR than it did in 1941) was very typical of the northern occupied territories.]

Still, there was no mass famine such as decimated the Ukraine, and the proportion of uprooted peasants was smaller than in the south.

By 1933 the main collectivization drive was completed; a measure of agricultural stability had been achieved. But the German invasion eight years later revealed that the peasants were by no means reconciled to the collective system. The mass of detailed evidence on this point (treated at length in Chap. IV) can only be summarized here. Wherever possible, the peasants distributed the land and property of the kolkhozes among the individual households. There was great disappointment when the German occupation authorities insisted on retaining the kolkhoz as a convenient device for food procurement. The Soviet regime was forced to recognize the strength of the peasants' opposition to the collective farm system. There is some evidence that partisans were directed to tolerate division of the land among the peasants, and even to spread rumors that the Soviet system of collectivized agriculture would be abandoned after the war. Even published Soviet sources indicate that during the first period of the war the regime at least avoided directly informing the peasantry that the collective system would be reimposed. The traditional term "peasant" *(krestyanin)* was used in place of the Soviet term "collective farm worker" *(kolkhoznik).* In the spring of 1942, at a time when the Smolensk partisans were under great pressure, the oblast Party organizations continued to refer among themselves to "kolkhozniks"; but simultaneously the Soviet authorities formed a "Lenin Peasant Antifascist Union."

[*Partizanskaya borba . . . na territorii Smolenshchiny,* pp. 122-123, 513.]

Apparently the terms "peasant" and "antifascist" were designed to appeal to the peasants' patriotism; propaganda emphasized German mistreatment of the peasants rather than the virtues of the Soviet system. After the emergency was over, however, the "Union" was quietly dropped, and the positive symbols of the Soviet order, "Communist" and "kolkhoznik," predominated. Up to the end of the war, however, the partisans tolerated (and sometimes encouraged) the peasant inclination to active attendance at Orthodox religious services. Even today Soviet sources admit that the toleration of religion was necessary to avoid offending the peasants.

The position of the partisans among the peasants was ambiguous. In some respects the peasants identified the partisans as "ours." The ethnic background and speech of the partisans were probably the most powerful factors inducing this identification in Belorussia and the RSFSR. Probably four-fifths of all the partisans were Belorussian or Great Russian by nationality. (See Chap. III, Sect. I, C.) A Soviet source (using admittedly incomplete data) indicates that 70 per cent of the Orel oblast partisans were Russian, 15 per cent Ukrainian, and 10 per cent Belorussian.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 237.]

Given the fact that this partisan concentration was in a Great Russian area near the borders of the Ukraine and Belorussia, the nationality distribution would seem to have been well balanced from the standpoint of securing local identification with the partisans. The situation was rather different in the Ukraine. A Soviet source indicates that there were 23,097 Russians and 5,747 Belorussians in "the largest partisan detachments of the Ukraine."

[*Ibid.,* p. 504.]

The total strength of these detachments is not given, but one can infer from the relatively small number of partisans active in the Ukraine before mid-1943 that these non-Ukrainians must have constituted a considerable portion of the earlier partisans operating in the Ukraine. One Soviet source (criticizing an earlier work by the present writer) maintains that the fact that V. A. Begma's brigade had 73.5 per cent Ukrainians and Belorussians in August 1943 and 82 per cent Ukrainians, Poles, and Belorussians in February 1944 shows that the partisan movement in the Ukraine was predominantly indigenous.

[Colonel S. Doroshenko, "O falsifikatsii istorii partisanskogo dvizheniya v burzhauz-noi pechati," *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal,* No. 7 (1960), p. 103.]

In fact, these data would appear to show that the partisans *tended* to become Ukrainian as the war went on and larger numbers of local peasants were recruited, rather than that the initial partisan movement and the cadres were Ukrainian. On the whole, the evidence suggests that in the Ukraine, in contrast to the more northerly areas, the partisans represented an ethnically as well as a socially alien element.

The partisans were basically a socially alien element everywhere. As was shown above, the first-stage partisans were predominantly members of the Party, police, and state apparatus; urban in background; and relatively well educated. So were the hard core of Red Army officers and commissars and the members of the special organizing teams who combined to revive the partisan movement in the winter of 1941-42. While the rank and file of the cut-off army men were predominantly peasant in background, many were former industrial workers. As late as 1943 these elements predominated in a partisan force whose composition differed sharply from the peasantry among which it operated. The incomplete Soviet data cited above indicates that 38.8 per cent of the Orel partisans were industrial workers; 30.2 per cent white-collar workers; and only 31 per cent peasants.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 237.]

In contrast to the overwhelmingly low level of peasant education, 74 per cent of the partisans had at least some secondary education. Up until the latter part of 1943, therefore, the partisans were an educated, urban group. As such, they resembled the forces which for generations had sallied forth from the towns to impose the demands of central authority upon the reluctant peasant mass.

In 1943 and 1944 the composition of the partisans changed sharply. The Red Army contingent declined absolutely as the German antiguerrilla operations took their toll. On the other hand, the partisans absorbed tens of thousands of peasant youths. Some of these were fugitives from the Ostarbeiter program, or, more commonly, men whom the partisan officers drafted to prevent the Germans from filling their labor pools as well as to replenish the partisans' own ranks. A smaller number of police deserters and other persons of rural background who sought to prove their loyalty to the Soviet regime were enlisted. Even voluntary recruits were regarded scornfully as "partisans of 1943," i.e., those who wanted to get on the winning Soviet bandwagon. Frequently such men were segregated from the hardened partisans of Red Army background and given inferior supplies and equipment. This treatment was not wholly a matter of rewarding the tried supporter of the system and punishing the lukewarm. The partisan command knew that the peasant recruits, in contrast to the army men, were apt to pay attention to German propaganda, and even to desert if they had a chance. Moreover, the peasants were most reluctant to accept the regime's prescription for movement of units away from their home bases. (See Sect. II, C, 3, above; Chap. Ill, Sect. II, C, and Sect. Ill, C, 1.) There was a definite status-order among partisans apart from (although often coinciding with) their official ranks: (1) volunteers of 1941 (usually apparatus members); (2) cut-off Red Army men; (3) peasants drafted or voluntarily joining after 1942; (4) police deserters. The Red Army men were never fully trusted by the officers because the latter recognized that if German treatment of prisoners had been milder and if the Soviet regime not exerted pressure upon the stragglers, they might never have been brought into an organized partisan movement. Nevertheless, the army men were invaluable because (in spite of some local ties which they acquired) they were relatively easy to persuade to move. Without the continuing strong numerical position (about 40 per cent) of the Red Army men in the partisan movement, it is doubtful whether it could have become as flexible an instrument as it did. Consequently, although the peasants by 1944 probably constituted a majority of the partisans, they were not first-class citizens of their units. This was another reason why the peasants continued to regard the partisan movement as an essentially alien force imposed from outside.

There seems to be no doubt that the peasantry resented the partisans, viewing them at best as the lesser evil. Yet it is worth noting that no spontaneous peasant organization, no popular peasant hero, arose to express rural grievances. In a very few instances the Soviet regime sought to portray one of its partisan leaders as a representative of the peasantry. The outstanding example was Sidor Kovpak, who was acclaimed as a simple, fatherly man, a descendant of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Whatever his earlier background, Kovpak actually held a minor government post when the war began. Generally, however, the regime did not stress the peasant affiliations of its partisan commanders. On the other side, none of the anti-Soviet leaders who came forward during the occupation arose from the peasant masses. Of those whose bases of support were most thoroughly rural, Kaminsky was Polish in ethnic background and had held white-collar jobs; the Ukrainian nationalist partisan leader Taras Borovets had operated a small quarry before the war. Although the Germans would have made a real *Jacquerie* impossible, there were few signs of even incipient rebellion by the peasants against their tormentors, whether partisan or occupation forces. This does not mean that the peasantry was passive, or that it did not know what it wanted. The spontaneous partition of the kolkhozes is sufficient evidence to the contrary. But when they were confronted with force the peasants adopted a cautious, waiting attitude. This is scarcely surprising in the light of the peasants' unhappy history during the preceding quarter of a century.

C. THE PARTISANS AND THE SOVIET CONTROL APPARATUS

In 1941 the Soviet totalitarian system had only begun the difficult process of digesting the peasant mass. The leadership cadres of the partisans, on the other hand, were as close as any

element of the Soviet population to being the "new men" who were the goal of the "socialist" transformation. Nearly all of the officers had been brought up and educated under the Soviet system, and had been through protracted courses of Communist indoctrination. In the 1941 partisan movement (in Moscow oblast) 63 per cent of the partisans were Communists, 15 per cent Communist Youth League members (Komsomols).

[Institut Istorii Partii Moskovskogo Oblastnogo Komiteta i Moskovskogo Gorod-skogo Komiteta KPSS, *Narodnye mstiteli* (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1961) (hereafter cited as *Narodnye mstiteli),* p. 115.]

By the end of the war, however, Party members were scarcely more numerous in the partisans than in a cross section of the Soviet male population of military age. Only 7 per cent of all the Ukrainian partisans were Communists, and less than 12 per cent of the remainder were Komsomols. The proportions were somewhat higher in Belorussia and, probably, in the partisan movement as a whole.

[Cf. John A. Armstrong, *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite: A Case Study of the Ukranian Apparatus* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1959), pp. 131, 139-140; and Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* p. 163.]

(See Chap. III, Sect. I, A, 5.) But throughout the war practically all of the officers were Party members. Most had been Party members before the war, but if a nonmember distinguished himself as a "natural leader," he was soon enrolled in the Party ranks.

The leadership cadres just discussed constituted a small portion of the apparatus officials (numbering several hundred thousand) whom we have called the "shareholders" of the Soviet system. These men had far greater status and far heavier responsibilities than the average Party member, to say nothing of the average citizen. They were also the material from which the "elite" was chosen. The elite itself, however, may be defined as the middle level of the apparatus: officials who occupied positions of great executive power, although without direct influence on policy making. This elite (a few thousand men) included Party officials of proconsular power, such as the *obkom* first secretaries; directors of important departments in the central and Republic offices of the Party, NKVD, and more crucial state administrative agencies; and high political and military officers in the Red Army. The inner circle of officials (whom we have called "the regime") consisted of the few dozen men who had fairly frequent access to Stalin. Stalin's power was absolute in those matters which received his attention, but he was compelled by circumstances to delegate broad areas of responsibility to members of the Politburo, the State Defense Committee, his personal secretariat, and the more important People's Commissars. Members of "the regime" were not, of course, engaged in commanding partisan units. Several members (such as Khrushchev and Zhdanov) played an important part in directing partisans, but this activity was never more than a minor part of their duties. It is possible that a few top officials engaged in full-time partisan direction, such as Strokach, were on the fringe of those enjoying access to Stalin, however. (See Appendix, Document 6.)

There is considerable indirect evidence that the regime did not ordinarily assign even its middle-rank officials to the hazardous business of commanding partisan or underground organizations behind the enemy lines.

The highest official known to have received such an appointment was A. F. Fyodorov, a Party *obkom* first secretary.

[See Fyodorov, *The Underground Committee,* especially pp. 16-18, 21, 39-40, 42-44.]

Other oblast officials assigned to partisan and underground work had nearly always held lower ranks. One official apparently was suffering from tuberculosis when assigned to underground work.

[Suprunenko, pp. 82-83.]

There is reason to suspect that some officials assigned to command partisans were "expendable" in another sense. A possible example was S. A. Oleksenko, who acted as head of the Kamenets-Podolsk underground *obkom* and partisan detachments from the spring of 1943 until the arrival of the Red Army. Oleksenko had been first secretary of the Kamenets-Podolsk *obkom* in November 1937, but thereafter had not been mentioned in the Soviet press. One is inclined to suspect that he fell into disfavor or worse during that year of Stalin's Great Purge and was given the underground assignment as a chance to rehabilitate himself. The circumstances of Oleksenko's appointment are not unique. S. V. Rudnev, who, until his death in action in 1943, appears to have been the guiding force in Kovpak's roving band, is described as a professional Red Army officer with wide experience. It is hard to understand why he was rusticating in a minor post in Sumy oblast when the war broke out, unless he had felt the effects of the purge. The veteran advisor of the Spanish Civil War, Mokrousov (see Sect. II, A, above) held the insignificant post of director of a game preserve until war brought him back to a key position. Since Old Bolsheviks who had served in Spain were special targets for the purge, one would suspect that he, too, required rehabilitation. There is only one instance, but a very significant one, in which we can be certain that rehabilitation occurred through partisan service. D. M. Medvedev has recently been the subject of a full-scale biography written by one of his partisan lieutenants. The biographer recounts how Medvedev, an old Chekist (political police officer) became involved in difficulties after he criticized the methods of the higher police officials under N. I. Yezhov and L. P. Beria. Shortly before the war broke out Medvedev, though relatively young, retired because of "poor health." A few days after the German invasion began, however, Medvedev went to the People's Commissariat of State Security (NKGB) with a plan for forming a partisan parachute detachment.

[A. Tsessarskii, *Chekist: Povest* (Moscow. Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1960), pp. 309 ff.]

Eventually he commanded an important partisan group in Volhynia.

1. The Revival of Conspiracy

A major reason for bringing Old Bolsheviks and Old Chekists back into service was that these men, unlike the majority of the "men of 1938" whom Stalin had promoted after the Great Purge, were experienced in the conspiratorial tactics which underground and partisan organization required. In effect, the regime had to revive the tradition of fanatic individual initiative which had prevailed in Lenin's day. The frame of mind which this tradition fostered had become increasingly repugnant to Stalin and his lieutenants. It conflicted with the rigidly centralized control which marked the establishment of Stalin's complete dictatorship in the 1930's. Individual initiative, or even too much enthusiasm, seems to have aroused Stalin's suspicions. Moreover, he increasingly sought a measure of institutional stability which was hardly compatible with a reversion to primitive Bolshevik fanaticism. It is clear that the emergency of war forced Stalin to reconsider his policies in these as in other respects. Nevertheless, the regime was obviously nervous about the inevitable relaxation of organizational rigidity among the partisans. Any dictatorial regime faces problems when it arms large bodies of ordinary citizens. The Soviet regime had worked out an elaborate system of controls to maintain the loyalty of the citizen-in-arms in the Red Army, but these controls could not be fully applied to partisan

conditions. The very essence of the partisan movement was defiance of authority. Even though Soviet propaganda constantly described the German occupation officials as "bandits" and usurpers, the psychological step from tricking and resisting them to adopting the same tactics toward Soviet authority might not be a long one. Younger partisans were likely to develop irregular habits of work, family relations, and personal behavior which would make them misfits in postwar Soviet society. "Illegalism"—the habit of using lies, deceit, stealth, and violence against occupying power—might leave a residue of behavior patterns which would present problems for any ordinary government. In part (as was suggested in Sect. I) these liabilities were offset by the benefits which the Soviet regime might derive from the break-up of traditional patterns which had impeded the full imposition of totalitarianism. Purges of the partisans after the Germans were ejected removed the most suspect individuals. After the war the carefully domesticated myth of partisan glory tended to turn the memories of partisan experience into channels beneficial *to* the system. Nevertheless, it was very important to the regime to act immediately to control the potentially dangerous aspects of the partisan movement.

2. Means of Ensuring Control

The first and basic step was the insistence on strict discipline. Officers were to be obeyed without question. "Unnecessary democracy," such as practice of consulting rank-and-file partisans before making decisions was sharply condemned.

[Anton P. Brinskii, *Po etu storonu fronta: Vospominaniya partizana* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1958), pp. 254, 349-350]

Strict subordination was also demanded of detachment commanders, although they were allowed more leeway to express their opinions. An especially severe controversy arose in 1942 over the combination of smaller detachments into big brigades. Aside from the military reasons for this reorganization, the regime probably considered that it was desirable as a means of increasing control. Many of the detachment commanders had attained their positions more or less through accident. Even though they were sufficiently capable and loyal to be left in subordinate posts, the regime could control them more surely if it placed them under carefully selected brigade commanders.

It is interesting to note that one of the brigade commanders who was most effective in overcoming the detachment commanders' resistance was A. N. Saburov, a former minor NKVD official. The general reliance of the regime upon NKVD influence in the partisan movement is striking. Much of the evidence for this influence is presented in Chapters II and III; there is no need to recapitulate it here. However, a careful reading of Soviet sources indicates that police influence (the NKVD and the NKGB may be regarded as interchangeable for our purposes) was perhaps even greater than the German reporters realized. An extraordinary number of partisan officers, high and low, are casually identified in Soviet works as men with police backgrounds. Occasionally there is even a suggestion of group solidarity among these men. For example, M. I. Naumov, who had been a police frontier guard officer, remarked in reference to a partisan of similar background that once a man had been a frontier guard one could trust him.

[Vershigora, *Reid,* p. 234.]

From the organizational standpoint, the NKVD was closely involved with the partisans at all times. The "special sections" ("00") which eventually were placed in all units were important checks on partisan loyalty. Before the establishment in mid-1942 of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement and the regional staffs, the NKVD shared directly (along with the Party and the Red Army) in partisan control. In 1941, for example, partisans in Moscow oblast were

selected jointly by the Party *obkom* and the oblast NKVD administration, and the detachments communicated with headquarters through dual radio networks, one operated by the *obkom,* the other by the oblast NKVD.

[*Narodnye mstiteli,* pp. 112, 115.]

For unexplained reasons, the Central Staff was disbanded on 13 January 1944.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 469.]

It appears very unlikely that it had no successor as central control agency. Quite possibly the Fourth Administration of the NKVD, which was the police agency directly concerned with partisan operations, assumed this function.

[Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* p. 162; cf. Suprunenko, p. 200, who notes that his information on the numerical strength of the partisans was obtained from the Fourth Administration of the MVD of the Ukraine.]

The Fourth Administration director was P. A. Sudoplatov (assisted by Eitingon), but it is possible that the mysterious "Sergiyenko" had some connection with this agency. (See Chap. II, Sect. Ill, C.) Much of the authority of the Central Staff passed to the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement, which was headed by T. A. Strokach, former deputy People's Commissar of the Interior of the Ukraine. Many of the Party leaders who were intimately associated with the origins and development of the partisans were from branches of the Party apparatus, particularly the cadres sections, which had had especially intimate contact with the police. In this category were M. A. Burmistenko, M. S. Spivak, V. A. Begma in the Ukraine; L. Z. Mekhlis, the head of the Red Army Political Administration in 1941; and P. K. Ponomarenko, who was chief of staff of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement itself.

It should be stressed, however, that the NKVD never controlled the partisans as a "private empire" in the way that the SS controlled certain aspects of the German war effort. In the first place, the NKVD was divided against itself—probably at Stalin's instigation. The Fourth Administration directorate was composed of secret police officers who were evidently (if postwar alignments can be projected backward) closely associated with Beria. Most of the prominent police officials in the Republic partisan headquarters and in the field whose backgrounds can be identified were, on the other hand, from the frontier guards. There has evidently been a long history of friction between the latter and the secret police around Beria. The most prominent of the frontier guard officers, Strokach, became a particularly bitter opponent of the Beria group in later years. (See subsection E below.) In addition, major Party officials not especially beholden to the police played a very important part in directing the partisans. N. S. Khrushchev's role may have been exaggerated in recent years, but there is no doubt that it was significant. A. A. Zhdanov is credited with having established the "prototype" of the partisan directing staff in his Leningrad oblast command.

[S.M. Klyatskin, "Iz istorii leningradskogo partizanskogo kraya (avgust 1941 — sentyabr 1942 g.), *Voprosy Istorii,* 1958, No. 7, p. 27.]

Finally, all the most important questions (such as plans for Ukrainian partisan activity in 1943) were reviewed by the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party headed by Stalin himself.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* III, 464.]

3. Operational Characteristics of the Partisan Elite

Even when there was no question of rebellion against the regime's orders—and except in very minor instances such rebellion did not occur—the partisan leadership exhibited many characteristics which were dysfunctional from the standpoint of the regime. Most of these characteristics do not seem to have been peculiar to the partisan movement, but reflected certain general traits of the Soviet leadership strata. The peculiar conditions of partisan life tended to bring these traits to the surface. Furthermore, the great amount of information which is available concerning the partisan leaders enables us to scrutinize these traits more carefully than we can in most other segments of Soviet officialdom. The same is true, generally, of the positive characteristics (again, viewed from the standpoint of the regime) of the officials who were engaged in directing the partisans.

The partisan experience provides ample evidence—if more is required— that Soviet officials are not selflessly devoted to serving their system. While the possibility of accumulating property is eliminated, the opportunity for personal gratification is not. It is evident, of course, that "gratification" is a relative term, for nearly all partisans underwent severe deprivations and physical suffering. In a sense the extent of deprivations and risks made the opportunities for gratification more attractive. These opportunities were available in accordance with rank. Officers received symbolic rewards such as medals, new uniforms, and Nagan pistols. At times they received better rations. Frequently they had more comfortable, private living quarters. One memoirist comments that the commander's living in a separate dugout could lead to abuses, but that sometimes the practice was justified.

[Brinskii, p. 382.]

Perhaps the grossest privilege of the officers—closely related to their separate living quarters—was their enjoyment of sexual "rights" to the small number of women partisans. Although there is abundant evidence that this practice was common (see especially Chap. Ill, Sect. I, A, 7), it is so obviously contrary to the puritanical code publicly proclaimed in the USSR that Soviet memoirists rarely refer to the partisan officers' sexual behavior. One writer does describe an instance in which a supply officer brought a girl from a civilian refugee camp to live in his quarters. He even let her interfere with his duties: "Who was to be given weapons first, who second, was decided not by him but by his forest wife."

[Makedonskii, p. 179.]

Probably more significant than the evidence of personal selfishness is the indication of trends toward group autarchy. Much of the effectiveness of any fighting unit depends on the development of group solidarity and *esprit de corps.* In regular military formations, negative aspects of this development are curbed by constant subordination to higher authority. Since the partisan units necessarily operated in a more isolated fashion, group solidarity frequently turned into looking out for unit interests at the expense of other partisan detachments. The success of the commander depended to a very large extent upon the prestige he enjoyed among his own men; consequently he tended to look after their interests to the exclusion of others. Some commanders insisted on their "sovereignty"; they tried to avoid subordination to any authority except the distant Central Staff.

[Linkov, p. 399.]

This tendency was closely related to the opposition which some detachment commanders showed in 1942 toward the formation of brigades. But apparently Saburov, who insisted on

forming one of the most important brigades, was just as adamant in refusing to take the next step of subordinating *his* enlarged unit to a higher group command within the Bryansk region. Saburov succeeded in maintaining his group's "independence." This was due partly to the fact that the regime did not wish to form too large partisan units. However (if a captured partisan staff officer's account is reliable) Saburov's privileged position was due also to the fact that he had used his control of a radio transmitter to inflate his reputation so greatly that the Soviet headquarters feared the impact on morale if he were to be downgraded.

[Alexander Ruzanov, "Pravda o partizanskom dvizhenii," *Frontovoi Listok,* 28, *30* October 1943]

Months later other partisan brigade commanders found that Saburov's men were unscrupulous in grabbing air-dropped supplies which had been intended for other units. The despoiled partisans retaliated in kind.

[Aleksei F. Fyodorov, *Podpolnyi obkom deistvuet* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1957), pp. 475, 506.]

Any student of Soviet industrial management will find striking parallels between these "autarchical" traits and the practices of plant managers and regional economic directors.

Often "autarchy" went hand in hand with an effort to escape control in order to be able to avoid dangerous and difficult tasks. Sometimes, on the other hand, partisan commanders evidently desired independence because they feared that the dead hand of bureaucracy in higher headquarters would cripple their efforts to operate effectively. A major characteristic of the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus is a reluctance to reach decisions. This reluctance, which ordinarily may lead only to inefficiency, can be fatal in partisan affairs. In a striking passage, one of the partisan leaders who was most insistent upon subordination of individual detachments to partisan field headquarters criticizes his Moscow headquarters:

I requested a decision from my superiors. But Moscow did not answer. Every day radiograms dealing with various matters came in, but they did not even contain a hint about the question we had raised. This is the way I understood it: our proposal still had not been placed before higher authorities, and the immediate directors did not want to take on themselves the full responsibility for such an important decision.

But we couldn't evade the responsibility of fighting. I reflected: if the assign-ment is fulfilled, nothing will come of it except the thanks we shall have earned; if, on the other hand, we die, there will also be somebody to remember us with kind words.

[Linkov, p. 269]

The approved personality for a partisan leader was one which empha-sized decisiveness, willingness to take risks, and contempt for routine. One major brigade commander relates how he, as a Party secretary before beginning his partisan duties, dealt with a "legalist" in the state banking system. The official refused to pay out money without the specific authorization from Moscow which the rules required, even though the Germans were at the gates of the city. After some argument, the Party secretary curtly told the bank official that his money was "mobilized" for the war.

[Begma and Kyzya, p. 13.]

The recounting of this incident at the beginning of the memoir seems to strike a keynote for the book. It indicates that the demand for placing effectiveness above bureaucratic compliance with rules is not confined to paramilitary operations, but is the expected response of the efficient Soviet official to any of the numerous emergencies which have beset the Soviet system. General orders are to be treated no more inflexibly than standing regulations. Anyone who takes refuge in literal conformity to the rules is a "legalist," anyone who relies on inflexible obedience to orders or conformity to doctrine is a "dogmatist." Rejecting the plea that maintenance of small detachments was necessary in 1942 to comply with *obkom* orders issued in 1941, a major partisan commander said: "However, it is just there that the great strength of our Party lies, that it nowhere and never fell into dead dogma, never and nowhere lived by a routine worked out once and for all. Every time the Party made a decision corresponding to the circumstances. At present the circumstances have fundamentally changed."

[A. N. Saburov, *Za linieyu frontu (partizanski zapysy): Kniga persha, Partizanskyi krai* (Lvov: Knyshkovo-Zhurnalne Vydavnytstvo, 1953), p. 181.]

The partisan officer was no more permitted to rely on obedience to a single superior than he was allowed to take refuge in standing orders or fixed regulations, As described in Chapter II (especially Sect. Ill, I) the Soviet regime never relied upon a single chain of command to control the partisans. All our efforts to reduce the complex control system to a precise and all-embracing table of organization have been fruitless; and the more evidence one obtains, the more difficult it becomes to work out precise delineations of authority. It is possible that we still do not have enough information, or have analyzed what we have improperly. It appears far more likely, however, that the regime deliberately maintained areas of ambiguity in its command structure. By maintaining multiple, overlapping chains of command it avoided giving the individual officer a secure spot in a hierarchy. As a result, he could not be sure who would inspect his work or give him orders. He could not, therefore, cultivate a comfortable relationship with a single superior who could be trusted to protect him in all circumstances. The tendency toward "family relations" up and down the levels of authority was diminished, if not eliminated altogether. Left naked, in a sense, before the demands of unknown superiors, the partisan commander remained in a state of uneasiness which induced him to use his initiative to anticipate demands.

One is compelled to admire the ingenuity by which the Soviet regime, deliberately or not, established control mechanisms which tended to squeeze the maximum effort from its lieutenants. It would appear that flexibility and ambiguity in the chain of command have been common attributes of Soviet control systems. Another general characteristic reflected in the partisans was the tendency of the regime to create a new organizational system whenever a major new problem arose. When the original scheme of partisan organization proved unviable, there was a long period (autumn 1941—spring 1942) of improvisation. Part of the territorial system of organization was salvaged; NKVD agencies continued in directing roles; Red Army front commands were used as organizational centers; and in September 1941 a "staff of the partisan movement" was formed in Leningrad. In May 1942 the Leningrad "solution" became the model for the Central Staff, and, in following months, for a number of regional staffs. The new organizations had the advantage of identifying the partisans with the Party rather than with the Red Army. As a result, in future years, the partisan movement could be hailed as a distinctive Party contribution to the great victory. At the same time, the staff arrangement brought together regular military personnel, Party officials, and the ubiquitous police officers in a body which constituted a formal recognition of the institutional interests in the partisan enterprise.

The formation of the staffs did not mean, however, that the system of partisan control became frozen. The increased responsibilities of the Ukrainian Staff after the Central Staff was abolished at the beginning of 1944 were clearly related to the need to extend partisan activity to politically

unassimilated territories in the West Ukraine and to the prospective East European satellites of the USSR. The Ukrainian Staff functioned (although Strokach was replaced as chief of staff by a partisan brigade commander, V. Andreyev) at least until June 1945, after the war in Europe ended.

[See the signature on the letter published in "Soviet-Czechoslovak Relations during the Great Patriotic War," *International Affairs* (Moscow), 1960, No. 8, pp. 119-121.]

There was nothing sacrosanct about the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Staff, however. For example, in the summer of 1943 the Staff formed a special operating group at the Red Army Voronezh Front headquarters in order to coordinate partisan operations with the rapid advance of the regular forces.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* III, 307.]

Altogether, the ability of the Soviet regime to improvise new solutions to changing situations is strikingly demonstrated by the history of partisan control arrangements.

D. THE EXTENSION OF THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM

1. The Western Territories Claimed by the USSR

So far our discussion has dealt primarily with the partisans' relation to the Soviet system in the "old" territories where Soviet power had prevailed for over two decades before the German invasion. As noted in Section I above, the situation in the areas which had been incorporated in the USSR in 1939 and 1940 was quite different. There, in June 1941, Soviet power still had a provisional look. The former governments were supplanted, but Soviet authority was still largely alien, dependent upon tens of thousands of imported officials. While the shape of the coming social transformation was apparent, traditional patterns of life (except among repressed elements and their families) were not fundamentally altered. Some of the basic institutions of the Soviet system, such as the collective farm, had not been introduced on a large scale. When the Germans arrived, the elements of the Soviet system which had been introduced vanished almost at once. To the Soviet regime, this situation meant that nearly all of the work of incorporating the new territories into the Soviet system would have to begin anew when they were reconquered. In the meantime, it was just as important in these territories, though far more difficult than in the "old" Soviet Union, to demonstrate that Soviet authority, though temporarily eclipsed, was inescapable. The sheer size of the areas affected made this a major Soviet objective. Some twenty million persons, over one-fourth of the population of the occupied territories, lived in the newly annexed lands.

The partisans constituted one of the few available instruments for reaching these territories before the Red Army could fight its way back from the gates of Moscow and Stalingrad. Unfortunately, the scope of the research into German documents upon which most of this book is based precluded detailed studies of the western areas. Nevertheless, enough information has come to light from various sources to permit one to present a fairly clear picture of partisan activity there. One is immediately struck by the wide variation in local conditions which the Soviet attempt to extend partisan activity encountered.

In Belorussia, the transition from "old" to "new" areas was a gradual one. Except for the lack of habituation to the Soviet system, the half of the Belorussian population which had been acquired from Poland in 1939 did not differ fundamentally from the older Soviet Belorussian population. For centuries both had consisted overwhelmingly of poor peasants of Orthodox faith. What

national consciousness the western Belorussian possessed was directed primarily against the Poles. In extending partisan activity to western Belorussia, the Soviet authorities were careful to de-emphasize the specifically Communist features of their system somewhat more than among the peasants farther east. As there were no kolkhozes to revive, the rights of individual peasants could be stressed unambiguously, though deceptively. In place of the Party, "antifascist committees" were publicized. Undoubtedly the partisans obtained less positive support in these areas than in eastern Belorussia. However, the enormous partisan concentration in eastern Belorussia simply spilled over into the western part of the Republic, becoming diluted the farther west it went, but not altering fundamentally in character. (See Chap. IX, Sect. I, D.) The only special obstacle encountered—aside from distance and the presence of fewer pro-Soviet elements—was the Polish national "Home Army." The Soviet partisans began the ruthless liquidation of the underground and guerrilla groups loyal to the exile government in London long before the Red Army arrived to destroy independence in the central Polish lands.

[See especially L. F. Tsanava, *Vsenarodnaya partizanskaya voina v Belorussii protiv fashistskikh zakhvatchikov,* II (Minsk: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo BSSR, 1951).]

The situation was entirely different in the Baltic Republics. Though Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia had been sovereign for little more than twenty years, they had developed firm traditions of independence. In addition, their populations differed fundamentally from that of any part of the old USSR in terms of religion and ethnic background. In 1939-40 the Soviet regime confronted these small nations with overwhelming force. When this force was withdrawn there was scarcely a vestige of support for Soviet authority. There was no viable partisan organization in 1941. But later penetration of the Baltic countries should have been greatly facilitated by the fact that they bordered on the Leningrad and Belorussian areas where the partisans were exceptionally numerous and vigorous. Nevertheless, even Soviet sources are compelled to admit that the partisans achieved nothing in the Baltic lands. In the summer of 1942 a "Latvian partisan regiment" started out from the Leningrad area, but got only as far as the Latvian frontier. In December 1942 the remnants of this unit, organized as a detachment numbering only one hundred, succeeded in getting into Latvia; but a year later the total number of Latvian partisans claimed by Soviet sources was only 854. The final total, in September 1944, was under three thousand.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 610; *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 337.]

Soviet writers blame these meager results on the lack of extensive forests in Latvia; in fact, the terrain there is nearly as favorable as in the adjoining Russian and Belorussian districts. There is scarcely any doubt that the fundamental reason for the partisans' failure was the uniformly hostile human environment. Results of partisan activity in Estonia and Lithuania appear to have been no more significant.

The effort to use partisans to maintain Soviet presence and reinstall Soviet authority was equally a failure in the Moldavian Republic, although the reasons may have been different. The Moldavian Republic was almost identical with the province of Bessarabia, governed by Rumania despite Soviet protests until 1940. Most of the population consisted of relatively poor peasants, Orthodox in religion, with a long history of incorporation in the Russian Empire, but Rumanian in language. There are few indications that this population displayed the sharp antipathy toward Soviet rule that characterized the Baltic nations. On the other hand, there is no evidence of positive support for Soviet authority. In an effort to implant partisan activity in Moldavia, two "Moldavian" brigades were formed fairly early in the war. It appears that their personnel was predominantly Russian and Ukrainian, and they were subordinate to the Ukrainian Staff of the

Partisan Movement. In any event, these brigades admittedly stayed in the Ukrainian forest 300 to 500 miles from Moldavian territory until the Red Army had reached "their" republic.

[Vershigora, *Reid, p. 107; Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 470.]

The situation in the annexed West Ukrainian territories was far more complex. Since the present writer has described it in detail elsewhere, it can be summarized briefly here.

[Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism,* especially Chapter VI.]

The Soviet regime devoted enormously greater efforts to installing the partisans in the West Ukraine than it did in the Baltic republics or Moldavia. Great sacrifices were made in 1942 to develop an underground network, supported by small partisan detachments, in the northern part of the region.

[Dmitrii N. Medvedev, *Silnye dukhom* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Voennogo Ministerstva SSSR, 1951).]

The West Ukraine was also a major objective of the roving bands. Kovpak's brigade arrived on the fringes of the area in early 1943; at a very high cost, the brigade traversed the heart of the West Ukraine during the following summer. Many of the other large roving bands operated in the West Ukraine, although usually with closer support from the Red Army. There seem to have been four principal reasons for this concentration of Soviet effort in the West Ukraine: (1) The region was the natural gateway to East European regions which the Communists wished to penetrate. (2) The West Ukraine had constituted a tranquil economic base for the Germans. (3) The Soviet regime hoped that a show of force would attract real support from certain West Ukrainian elements. (4) The Soviet partisans could play an important role in undermining the Ukrainian nationalist partisan movement, which presented a serious long-range threat to the installation of the Soviet system.

The Soviet effort succeeded to a limited extent only. Soviet partisans were able to use the West Ukraine as a highway to other areas, but only after the Red Army was close enough to provide substantial support. What injury was done to German economic resources (apart from the days immediately preceding the arrival of the Red Army) was due mainly to the nationalist reaction to the Soviet incursions rather than to direct accomplishments of Soviet partisans. The effect on the population was more complex. The Galician Ukrainians were nearly unanimous in refusing support to the partisans; if anything, the latter exacerbated anti-Soviet national feeling in Galicia. A considerable number of Volhynians (who, unlike the Galicians, were Orthodox in religion and had a long history of incorporation in the Russian Empire) did at least accept the partisans as representatives of an authority which would inevitably be reimposed. In Volhynia, as in western Belorussia, the partisans set up "antifascist committees" and encouraged religious services; these devices were recognized as necessary because the national, social, and religious differences in Volhynia were so great.

[Brinskii, p. 366.]

The partisans did not succeed in attracting a great deal of popular support even in Volhynia. It is possible, however, that their efforts contributed to eventual Soviet success (after the military reoccupation of the area) in establishing an informer network which hampered the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist partisans. Probably the greatest service which the Soviet partisans made toward eventually reducing the threat which the nationalist partisans posed for the Soviet system was to induce the nationalists to abandon covert activity in favor of a full-scale guerrilla

movement. The nationalists formed permanent guerrilla detachments both to fight the Communists and to prevent the Soviet partisans from drawing in all who wished to fight the Germans. This "deconspiration" certainly made it easier for the Soviet authorities to deal with the nationalists in Volhynia. Even in Galicia, where the population was nearly unanimous in supporting the nationalists, their efforts at partisan warfare may ultimately have played into the Soviet hands.

[Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism,* p. 165.]

The Soviet partisans had little to do with the physical crushing of the nationalist guerrillas, however; Soviet sources admit that in the summer of 1944 the Red Army found it necessary to detail one cavalry and two motorcyclist regiments to assist an undisclosed number of NKVD troops combatting the nationalist partisans.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 224.]

Other evidence suggests that the number of regular Soviet troops required in subsequent years, at least until 1947, was even larger.

2. The Satellites-to-Be

Soviet partisans writing since the war admit that they encountered special problems in the territories annexed in 1939 and 1940, although they take it for granted that the partisan campaign there was part of a single effort to drive the invader from Soviet soil and to reassert the authority of the legitimate government. The partisans were not to stop, however, when they reached the "new" Soviet frontier. If a postwar account is to be credited, a partisan commander was given a sealed order from the Ukrainian Staff to be opened when he reached the frontier. The cryptic order read: "On arrival at the frontier of our country remember the liberating mission of the Soviet Union. ... Act independently according to existing conditions and the conscience of a Soviet citizen."

[Vershigora, *Reid,* p. 256 (ellipses in the original Russian text).]

The commander, relying on his "socialist" conscience, interpreted his "liberating mission" to mean that

There, beyond the rickety frontier marker, lives and struggles a fraternal Slavic people. It was pouring forth its blood. Thirty-two parties had brought it to war and defeat. . . . And only the single, workers' party, together with us, could lead Poland on the road to national liberation. . .

[*Ibid.,* p. 258 (ellipses in the original).]

The "workers' party" was, of course, the Polish Workers' Party, which was in fact the Communist Party under a new name.

If the roving bands had been a prime instrument for "transplanting" the partisan movement from the Bryansk forests to the northwestern Ukraine in 1943, in 1944 they became a major device for grafting the highly developed Soviet partisan organization on the weak Communist-led guerrilla forces of the USSR's neighbors. Just as the Soviet partisans attacked and destroyed the guerrillas of the Home Army representing the London Polish government, they aided and equipped the guerrillas of the much smaller "National Guard" formed by the Polish Communists. In the spring of 1944 regular radio communication between Soviet headquarters and the National Guard was

established, and the Polish Communist partisans were supplied by air. About the same time, a Polish Staff of the Partisan Movement was organized.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 798; *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 489.]

Many months before this, Soviet partisans throughout the occupied territories had emphasized recruitment of East Europeans. Some of these (especially Poles) came from long-established colonies in the USSR, or escaped from German labor camps.

[*Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 797.]

Most of the Slovaks, Hungarians, and Rumanians were deserters from German satellite occupation units, or were captured by the partisans. Very probably at an early stage of the war the Soviet regime began to think in terms of using such men as cadres for building up Communist resistance forces in their home countries. In February 1944 a large number of the Poles serving in three of the big roving bands were screened out and reassigned to a Polish partisan brigade. In April selected partisans of Polish and Czechoslovak nationality were withdrawn for special training. They were instructed in a camp in Volhynia by experienced Soviet partisan officers, radio operators, and demolition experts.

[*Partizanskiye byli,* pp. 542-544.]

At the beginning of the summer this intensive partisan training program was expanded, supposedly on the request of Communist leaders from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Rumania. According to Soviet sources, the plea was addressed to Khrushchev as head of the Ukrainian Communist Party. He turned the matter over to the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement, which became the directing center for training, supporting, and controlling the partisans in all of these countries.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 490; *Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 804.]

It is probable that the net accomplishments of the Soviet roving bands and the Soviet-sponsored Communist partisans in Poland were slight. Occasionally they may have incited the nationalist Home Army to rash actions motivated by the desire either to protect Poles from the Communists or to demonstrate that the nationalists were more effective as a resistance force than the Communists. Considering, however, the overwhelming power which the Red Army ruthlessly employed to suppress the nationalist underground, any effect produced by the Communist partisans was at most ancillary.

The situation along the southwestern edge of the Ukraine was considerably more favorable to partisan activity. Here, in reality, there was no frontier. Legally—even in Soviet eyes—the Ukrainian SSR ended at the crest of the Carpathians. Beyond lay Carpatho-Ruthenia or Carpatho-Ukraine, ethnically almost identical with the Soviet Ukrainian Republic. The Carpatho-Ukraine was formally claimed by the *émigré* Czechoslovak government, which had been despoiled of the territory by Hungary in 1939. Most of the Ukrainian population, which had been more or less passive under Czechoslovak administration, sharply opposed the harsher Hungarian rule. The largest native faction supported Ukrainian nationalism, but Communist elements were much stronger in the Carpatho-Ukraine than in Galicia. Some Communist-led partisan groups were formed, although they were not very active until just before the arrival of the Red Army in the early autumn of 1944. In the meantime, Eduard Benes, head of the Czechoslovak government in exile, had apparently reached an understanding with Moscow to transfer the Carpatho-Ukraine to the USSR after the war. As a result, the Communist partisans

evidently were permitted to act as though they were already operating on Soviet soil; they set up "national committees" which later served as nuclei for the Soviet transitional administration.

[See Armstrong, *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite,* pp. 108-110, and the sources cited for this account.]

For the Soviet regime much of the value of a strongly entrenched position in the Carpatho-Ukraine lay in its strategic position. Not only did the region contain many of the important Carpathian passes, but it made the Soviet Union directly contiguous to Slovakia and Hungary. In mid-1944 these were prime targets for the extension of partisan activity. Soviet ef-forts to implant partisans in the third neighbor of the Carpatho-Ukraine, Rumania, were almost total failures. Soviet sources refer in passing to minor partisan groups active in various parts of Rumania, but it is obvious that these were unimportant.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 257.]

Apparently the strongly anti-Russian feeling of the Rumanian peasantry prevented Communist partisans from taking root. From the practical standpoint, partisan activities in Hungary were scarcely more significant. One Soviet source admits that the small units (totalling something in the neighborhood of two thousand men) sent with the assistance of the Ukrainian Staff into Hungary rendered no direct military services to the advancing Soviet forces. The Soviet source claims only that the existence of the Hungarian partisans had a high morale effect.

[*Ibid.,* p. 378.]

The situation in Slovakia was entirely different; there, and there alone, was the Soviet regime able successfully to transplant a partisan movement beyond its frontiers. In 1939, Slovakia had been set up as a nominally "independent" country; in fact it was completely under German tutelage. Whether or not the majority of the Slovaks welcomed the dissolution of the Czechoslovak state, they unquestionably resented the burdens placed upon them by Hitler's war effort—especially the dispatch of Slovak troops to the USSR. Slovak units were used almost entirely as security troops; they acted reluctantly, and there were numerous desertions to the partisans. As the war turned against the Axis, the Slovak army at home also became restive, and more inclined to recognize allegiance to the exile Czechoslovak government in London. But the army leaders wished to carry out a revolution which would take the country out of the Axis with most of its institutions intact and with as little risk of drastic German repressions as was possible. Since the war Czechoslovak Communist and Soviet sources have complained that even the Slovak Communist leadership inside the country fell under the influence of the "London conception": i.e., it wished to delay the uprising until the Red Army was near; to carry out a coup d'état rather than a "revolutionary struggle"; and to preserve the "bourgeois" structure of the country.

[*Ibid.,* p. 317.]

This plan did not, of course, suit the Soviet book. It appears very probable that the Soviet regime in conjunction with Klement Gottwald, Rudolf Slansky, and other Czechoslovak Communist leaders in the USSR, determined to force the hand of the anti-Axis leadership inside Slovakia, Communist and non-Communist alike, by instigating large-scale partisan activities. In 1943, while on his Carpathian raid, Kovpak had sent some of his partisans of Slovak origin on to Slovakia to organize native partisan units. The rapid defeat of Kovpak's roving band soon severed this contact, however.

[Vershigora, *Reid,* p. 29.]

As a result, the partisan detachments trained and organized by the Ukrainian Staff constituted the essential instrument for carrying out the plan for stimulating guerrilla war in Slovakia. Mixed detachments composed of 220 of the especially trained Czechoslovaks and 450 Soviet partisans were sent into Slovakia by parachute beginning in June 1944. By the end of August, thirty such detachments, averaging a score of men each, had arrived. They served as a stiffening and organizing element for the local partisan forces which the underground Communists in Slovakia were organizing. At the same time, large roving bands of Soviet partisans were able to penetrate the extreme eastern portion of Slovakia.

["Soviet-Czechoslovak Relations during the Great Patriotic War," pp. 119-121; I.A. Peters, "Dopomoha radyanskykh partyzaniv slovatskomu narodnomum povstan-nyu v 1944 r.," Akademiya Nauk Ukrai'nskoi RSR, Institut Istorii, *Naukovi Zapysky, VII (1956), p.90; Sovetskiye partizany,* p. 804.]

By the latter part of August a partisan movement totalling 8,000 had created turmoil in a large part of the country. On the formal request of the Slovak puppet government, German troops began to occupy the country. Confronted with this situation, leaders of the regular Slovak army felt that they must begin their uprising or forfeit all chance for taking Slovakia out of the Axis. The regular army revolt began on 30 August 1944. The Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement sent in many more partisan detachments (ultimately 3,000 Soviet partisans were in Slovakia) and large quantities of munitions.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 333.]

But there was little coordination with the Slovak National Council (directing the army rebellion), and no significant Soviet aid was sent to it. Rejecting the "Slovak Main Staff of the Partisan Movement" formed in mid-September by the National Council as "ineffective," the Communist leadership asked the Ukrainian Staff to send in an organizing group. At the end of September this group, headed by a Soviet colonel, arrived.

[Ibid,. p 327.]

By that time the isolated Slovak nationalist forces were in desperate straits; a month later they were obliged to surrender to the Germans. The Communist-led partisans continued to fight a guerrilla war. It had little serious effect on the German occupation; but it turned Slovakia, which had had a traditional peasant society, into chaos.

[See Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* pp. 167-168, and the sources cited for this discussion.]

Undoubtedly this breakdown of established institutions made it easier for Communists to gain ground in Czechoslovakia after the arrival of the Red Army. Simultaneously, the Communist leadership acquired a patriotic aura because of its apparent heroic effort to prevent German occupation. The effect of these developments upon the eventual Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia cannot be assessed precisely. It is significant, however, that from being the most conservative portion of the prewar Czechoslovak Republic, Slovakia by 1946 had become a Communist stronghold.

On the whole, the Soviet essay in transplanting partisan activity to its neighbors was not spectacularly successful, especially when it is compared to the achievements of the Yugoslav

partisans in aiding Communist guerrillas in adjoining countries. The Soviet effort is sufficient, however, to indicate how important the Soviet regime considered guerrilla tactics to be in spreading Communism. Ultimately Red Army occupation was the means by which Communist governments were fastened on most of the East European countries bordering on the USSR. But military intervention could never achieve the appearance of mass popular support which a cleverly managed partisan movement could attain. Forcible interference with established institutional patterns which constituted barriers to Communism was much more apt to create resentment than was the "automatic chaos" created by partisan activity. Guerrilla activity also strengthened the self-confidence of the local Communists, even if Soviet partisans provided the essential stiffening. Partisan training in the USSR and partisan activity in the field also provided an excellent opportunity for screening native Communist leadership elements. For a relatively small investment, the Soviet regime not only provided a minor auxiliary force for the Red Army but in the few areas where partisans were successful obtained enormous political dividends.

The whole episode of the partisan advance into East Europe shows how fluid national boundaries are in Soviet thinking. From the old Soviet territory to the newly annexed regions to the secretly promised Carpatho-Ukraine to the territory of the USSR's formal allies—all these were moves on a chessboard of political expediency. Soviet planners carefully assessed the differing social and political circumstances in each area and adjusted the superficial aspects of their policies accordingly. Considerations of legal obligation or popular self-determination were never given serious weight, however. Throughout, the objective was the establishment of Communist regimes, concealed under the euphemisms of aid to "workers' parties," "development of the revolutionary struggle," and "elimination of the bourgeois structure." The key roles in these plans ascribed to Khrushchev and his NKVD minion Strokach are extremely interesting. In a way, the quick, intuitive response of Soviet partisan commanders (or, at least, their present claims to have made such a response) to the vague orders they received is equally interesting. It suggests that there is a depth of indoctrination in the expansionist aims of Communism which permits the regime to count on its lieutenants' exercising initiative in furthering a dynamic policy beyond the Soviet borders.

E. THE PARTISANS IN THE POSTWAR USSR

In subsection B above it was suggested that the Soviet regime probably regarded the conspiratorial attitude and irregular habits fostered by partisan life as potentially disruptive in postwar Soviet society. As far as the rank-and-file partisans were concerned, the "treatment" of this problem was begun soon after the Red Army reoccuppied the areas of partisan activity. Except for the large roving bands and other detachments which could profitably be dispatched for continued activity farther to the west, the partisan units in the reconquered areas were scheduled for rapid disbandment. Frequently the partisans were permitted a victory parade through the towns on whose outskirts they had skirmished. Sometimes they were then allowed a few days or weeks of leave. In the meantime, according to rumors which are hard to substantiate definitely, suspect or recalcitrant elements were screened out and sent to concentration camps. Most of the rank-and-file partisans appear, however, to have been sent very quickly to the Red Army. One Soviet source indicates that of 3,149 partisans in the Vinnitsa area, 2,345 went to the army.

[*Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny,* IV, 472.]

There—if they survived the war —the partisans acquired a salutary dose of stringent discipline, while their particular partisan experience became submerged in the general experience of war-time military service common to Soviet men of their age group.

Treatment of the partisan leadership cadres was rather different. Undoubtedly there was some screening of unreliable elements in this group, too. Generally speaking, however, the screening of the officer corps had proceeded throughout the years of partisan activity. In one area, at least, the Red Army was forbidden to induct commanders and commissars of detachments or higher partisan echelons without approval of the Party *obkom* secretary.

[H.Gr. Mitte, Ic, 2 August 1944 (GMDS, 113/1175).]

One of the great, though unplanned, side benefits to the Soviet regime of the partisan episode was its value as a testing ground for new leadership personnel. If under the trying conditions of partisan activity an official displayed the positive qualities outlined in subsection C, while at least avoiding flagrant display of the negative qualities, he clearly was a valuable asset for the future. In particular, a man who displayed initiative while maintaining complete loyalty and self-discipline even when he could not be immediately checked by his superiors possessed a combination of qualities which could be put to excellent use in the peacetime totalitarian system. The regime appears to have recognized this potential during the war by taking special steps to evacuate partisan commanders like Kovpak when their units were in danger of annihilation. Since the war, men with partisan leadership backgrounds have often had brilliant careers.

It would require a special monograph to trace the postwar careers of former partisan officers in detail. Some trends stand out, however. Former NKVD officers generally returned to police service, but at higher levels. Thus Naumov and Saburov, who had held minor police posts before the war, became heads of the police administrations in important frontier oblasts. S. S. Belchenko, chief of staff of the partisan movement at the Kalinin Front, had risen by 1957 to the high post of Deputy Chairman of the Committee on State Security. Party officials tended to return to the Party apparatus in positions resembling those they had held in the partisans. Usually they also remained within the same Union Republics. V. N. Malin, the head of the political section of the Central Staff, was by 1958 a section chief in the Soviet Communist Party central Secretariat. Aleksei Bondarenko, a minor official in a rayon in the Bryansk area before the war, became first secretary of the Bryansk *obkom* after his brilliant partisan achievements. Moisei S. Spivak, prewar secretary for cadres in the Ukraine, who played a major role in the initial organization of the partisan movement there and later was prominent in the Ukrainian Staff, enjoyed a few years of prominence after the war. After some published criticism, he disappeared shortly before Stalin died; possibly he was a victim of the secret purge of Jews. Other members of the central Ukrainian partisan apparatus who were prominent in the Ukrainian Staff, such as A. N. Zlenko, continued to hold important posts throughout the Stalin period and after. A very high proportion of the lower officials assigned as secretaries of the underground Party committees were killed during the occupation. This was the fate of the *obkom* secretaries in Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Kirovograd, and Poltava, as well as many in lower posts. On the other hand, several (usually those sent in as replacements after the initial debacle) who survived were rewarded with high posts in the Ukrainian provinces after the war. S. A. Oleksenko, after his successful direction of the Kamenets-Podolsk underground, regained the status of regular *obkom* first secretary (in Drogobych) which he had apparently lost during the Great Purge. P. Kh. Kumanok, who directed the Sumy underground, held secondary secretarial posts in *obkoms* after the war. The prewar Vinnitsa *obkom* secretary for cadres, D. T. Burchenko, was promoted after his direction of the Vinnitsa underground to head the state apparatus in that oblast. M. A. Rudich became secretary of a Party district committee in Lvov after heading the underground in Lvov oblast.

[For additional details on the postwar careers of underground and partisan leaders in the Ukraine, see Armstrong, *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite,* pp. 131-132.]

Apart from its value as a testing ground for officials of the Soviet apparatus, the partisan movement had enormous potential for use by the regime as an inspirational legend. That the regime has recognized this potential is indicated by the enormous outpouring of books about the partisans. It is evident that the publication of documents, memoirs, and histories on partisan activity has been closely related to shifts in the "general line" of Communist propaganda and to power rivalries in the Soviet regime. A detailed investigation of these relationships would require close examination, employing the tools of content analysis, of the themes treated in books appearing at various times. Such an investigation would also include careful comparisons of the textual variations, small but often significant, in successive editions of the same book. In the absence of such a detailed investigation, the observations presented in the following paragraphs are necessarily somewhat impressionistic; but they at least suggest the main lines of development in the partisan literature.

During the war and for a short time thereafter works on the partisans tended to picture the movement as a popular, patriotic uprising against the Germans. While the partisan movement was never described as spontaneous, the elements of Party and NKVD direction were played down. This treatment seems to have been in close accord with the general Soviet propaganda line, which stressed an all-embracing patriotism as long as it was necessary to use all means to rally the Soviet peoples against the Germans. By 1946 the regime apparently felt that the time had come to re-emphasize the pre-eminence of Party controls and ideology. During the following two years (in what has been known as the "Zhdanovshchina") several of the earlier works were criticized for not emphasizing the decisive role of the Party in organizing and guiding the partisans. The emphasis on the close association between partisans and Party was closely related to the prestige of A. A. Zhdanov, whose Leningrad partisan operation had been especially successful. Toward the beginning of 1948, however, Zhdanov appeared to be losing his influence; in August he died. There are even some indications that Zhdanov's patronage of ex-partisans may have been involved in his decline.

[Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* p. 177.]

In the Soviet East European satellites a background of partisan activity tended, between 1948 and 1953, to make a Communist leader suspect of "bourgeois nationalism" and "Titoism." No doubt the primary reason for this suspicion was the strident Yugoslav emphasis on partisan warfare as the best way for Communist parties to come to power.

[See especially Eugenio Reale, *Avec Jacques Duclos au Banc des Accusés à la Réunion Constitutive du Cominform à Szklarska Poreba* (22-27 Septembre 1947) (Paris: Librairie Phon, n. d.), especially pp. 110 ff., 134 ff.]

It is notable, however, that the Slovak ex-partisans, who had been entirely under Soviet rather than Yugoslav guidance during the war, were prominent among the purge victims of this period. Within the Soviet Union, ex-partisans had to tread warily. The most striking instance of the danger inherent in glorifying partisan and underground exploits is, significantly, connected with D. M. Medvedev, whose partisan career had originally been a path to rehabilitation after his disputes with higher-echelon NKVD officers. In 1952 (in a Ukrainian magazine) Medvedev published an account of the Vinnitsa underground called "On the Banks of the Southern Bug." The series of articles was sharply criticized in a Vinnitsa newspaper for glorifying men who were poseurs rather than real underground heroes. In February 1953, just before Stalin died, the criticism was picked up by the influential central periodical *Literaturnaya Gazeta.*

[The article is translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* V, No. 7, pp. 38-39.]

After Stalin died Medvedev's account, apparently unchanged, was published in book form with a circulation of hundreds of thousands. An editorial note to one edition commented that the work had "required not only great labor, but also civil courage; when Medvedev went to work on the book, there was much which was unclear in the history of the Vinnitsa underground and several of its participants were subjected to unjustified accusations."

[Dmitrii N. Medvedev, *Na beregakh yuzhnogo Buga* (Kiev: Radyanskyi Pysmen-nyk, 1962), introductory note, p. 2.]

But Medvedev himself had died in 1954 at the age of fifty-six.

Immediately after Stalin died, some of the more prominent police officials who had participated in partisan direction became deeply involved in the conflict over Beria's position. Strokach played a key role in the events which ultimately led to Beria's downfall. One reason, probably, was that Strokach (if his wartime adjutant is to be believed) was bitterly anti-Semitic—he had once even accused Khrushchev of favoring Jews—while Beria was bringing back Jewish police officers whom Stalin had purged. Apparently the main reason, however, was Strokach's unwillingness to join in Beria's scheme to discredit the Ukrainian Party apparatus. Very likely this reluctance was partly due to the close ties with the Party which Strokach (and some of his subordinates with frontier-guard backgrounds) had developed while directing the partisans.

[Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism,* pp. 242, 406*n*48.]

At any rate, while Strokach was retired as head of the Ukrainian ministry of the interior in 1956, accounts of the partisan movement have continued to acclaim his role. On the other hand some—though by no means all—of the high police officials involved in central and Belorussian partisan direction were purged as followers of Beria. Sudoplatov and Eitingon, who had worked behind the scenes in the Fourth Administration of the NKVD, disappeared just as obscurely. L. F. Tsanava, head of the Belorussian police apparatus and author of the most detailed history which has been published on any phase of the partisan movement, was purged in 1956— and his book disappeared with him.

For most of the former partisan leaders, however, Khrushchev's rise to supreme power must have been highly gratifying. He is said to have ordered the compilation of manuscripts of partisan accounts as early as 1944.

[Naumov, p. 402.]

In 1949, Khrushchev conspicuously praised the partisans in spite of Stalin's tendency to suspect them. After Khrushchev secured control of the Soviet Communist Party, Soviet works emphasized the "fraternal aid" rendered to partisans in the East European Communist states, and a background of partisan activity again became a sign of distinction there. In the USSR the flood of partisan memoirs and documentary collections rose. For some unknown reason, however, Khrushchev has frowned upon systematic historical investigation of the partisan movement. In March 1962 he scornfully compared a dissertation on "Partisan Operations in the Belorussian Forests during the Patriotic War" to one on "The Ecology and Economic Importance of the European White Stork, the Black Stork and the Common Gray Heron in Belorussia." Both, he said, were "ludicrous" wastes of Soviet money. If there were to be treatments of the partisans and other phases of the war, let them be memoirs, articles, and literary works.

[Speech to Central Committee Plenum, March 9, 1962, as translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* XIV, No. 12, p. 11.]

In view of Khrushchev's frequent changes of course, it would be unwise to conclude that no detailed histories of partisan operations can be expected in the near future. There may be, however, a certain long-range significance in his remarks. As indicated above, the story of the partisan movement has provided the regime with a highly useful legend. The partisan legend forms part of the larger epic of "The Great Patriotic War," which is the heroic age of the generation now in power in the USSR. The partisan legend, however, has the advantage that it dramatizes the role of the Communist Party and its present leaders, while emphasis on regular military operations tends to enhance the prestige of the army. Several recent memoirs assert (with dubious historical validity) that service in the partisans was harder and more dangerous, and (by implication) more commendable than in the Red Army.

[Begma and Kyzya, p. 487; Makedonskii, p. 105]

In addition, the story of the partisans is particularly adaptable to indoctrination of youth. The theme of a daring band of dedicated young men living robustly in the open air, fighting against terrible odds, and wreaking vengeance on the blackest of villains has attracted young people from the days of Robin Hood to the Wild West. Add to this recipe the ingredients of a detective thriller, and an ideal vehicle for indoctrination is at hand. It is scarcely surprising that, even in the last years of Stalin's life, the output of partisan stories continued. The great majority of these are based on fact, but the literary editors (and occasional skilled writers from among the partisans, like Pavlo P. Vershigora) have recast the recollections of real partisans in dramatic form. Though unsophisticated, these stories provide a welcome contrast to the drab, obviously didactic tone of most officially favored Soviet writing. At the same time, the "literary" reworking of the partisan memoirs provides ample opportunity for the skilled propagandist to stress the positive elements of the partisans' characters and to warn indirectly against those characteristics which the regime regards as negative. In this way the partisan genre of literature is made to play a significant and probably effective part in the machinery of Soviet indoctrination. Its role is unlikely to diminish for many years to come.

PART I Analytic Studies

CHAPTER II Organization and Control of the Partisan Movement *John A. Armstrong and Kurt DeWitt*

§I. Introduction

Questions of organization and control were fundamental in the Soviet partisan movement during the Second World War. Their importance is clearly shown by experience in other incidents of modern guerrilla warfare. Decentralized organization is a necessary feature of all guerrilla warfare, for the complex structure of modern armies cannot be fully duplicated by irregular military forces compelled to maintain themselves in areas where the principal technical facilities are in the hands of the enemy. The guerrilla forces behind the enemy lines do not have a regular system of logistics. They must avoid large concentrations which would permit the potentially superior forces of the enemy to engage them in regular warfare, in which they are necessarily inferior. Aside from being essential for the preservation of the guerrilla units, simplicity of organization has certain subsidiary advantages. It requires a very small "overhead" of staff, communications, and technical services. Most guerrilla officers and noncoms need not be so specialized nor so highly trained in a military sense as those of regular units of the same size. As a result, elements of widely varying background and experience can be used in the command structure of guerrilla bands.

Like all groups which have a comparatively primitive type of organization, guerrilla units are hard to destroy, for the apparently shattered group tends to re-form quickly. However, the advantages inherent in simplicity and decentralization

have been offset for most of the modern guerrilla movements by serious disadvantages. Although a guerrilla group can recover quickly from physical dispersion by the enemy, it may disintegrate if certain key leaders are eliminated, because, unlike a regular military force, it frequently has no alternative organization to which the survivors are bound to attach themselves. Since even the unimpaired guerrilla band is not a part of a permanent institutionalized body, serious problems of morale and discipline may arise. [See Chap. III.] Although these problems are outside the purview of this study, the role of the guerrilla unit within the general strategy of war is of real pertinence. Guerrilla operations against the enemy are of comparatively little value to the over-all war effort unless they can be coordinated from the center and directed against important objectives. This is especially true because guerrilla units, particularly when they operate near the homes of their members, tend to shun activity which would result in strong enemy reprisals. As a rule, actions which the enemy counters energetically are, of course, precisely those which would be of most value to the over-all war effort of the country to which the guerrillas belong. For the Soviet regime the importance of controls was even greater, since, unlike countries where the guerrillas have arisen in a spontaneous reaction to foreign invasion, the occupied Soviet zone tended at first to accept the German occupation passively.

Aside from the military value, however, an important advantage of centralized direction lies in the political field. In a guerrilla movement where centralized control is not effective, individual commanders tend to become a law unto themselves. At first the leader of a band passively evades the control exerted by the central authorities, then openly sets up an opposition center. Experiences of this sort were frequent in civil wars in countries like Mexico and China in the second and third decades of this century and during the civil war in Russia and the Ukraine. The Soviet rulers vividly remembered their experiences with guerrilla leaders like Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, who declared their allegiance to the Soviet regime when it seemed expedient to do so, but eventually had to be forcibly suppressed when they refused to conform to Soviet decrees. They were determined to prevent the reappearance of such centrifugal tendencies in the event of another protracted war in the Soviet Union. The emergence of independent leaders from among its own citizens is to a totalitarian regime almost as distasteful as the complete control of these citizens by a foreign invader.

In order to preserve the advantages of guerrilla activities and, at the same time to avoid their traditional pitfalls, the Soviet leadership during the Second World War employed two types of control which had been little used in earlier guerrilla warfare. Because it was the Soviet Union, a major industrial power, which was supporting the bands, modern technical devices like the airplane and the radio were available. Of equal or greater importance where the techniques of political and social control peculiar to the regime. The central subject of this chapter is the manner in which the organizational and control structure of the Soviet partisan movement evolved. One aspect concerns the application of established Soviet methods of control to the partisan movement; another is the manner in which the special circumstances of partisan warfare resulted in improvising new methods, or in modifying established ones. Taken in this way, the study of partisan warfare provides important insight into the functioning of the Soviet system under conditions of stress.

§II. The First Efforts of Partisan Organization

A. THE PREWAR SOVIET CONCEPT OF PARTISAN WARFARE

Partisan warfare occupied a fairly prominent place in several areas of Soviet thought during the interwar period. Military textbooks and courses in Red Army academies analyzed partisan operations of the Civil War period and occasionally referred to partisan activity in other periods or countries, such as the guerrilla war conducted against Napoleon in both Russia and Spain. Historical and political journals, especially those concerned with the history of the Communist Party, printed lengthy articles on the Red partisans of the Civil War. These articles analyzed the social and political background of the Civil War partisans and stressed political as well as military aspects of the movement.

[See Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953). pp. 391-94.]

Partisan leaders were extolled as models of "militancy" and devotion to communism. While many of the Civil War partisan leaders sank into obscurity soon after the Soviet regime was firmly established or were purged during Stalin's efforts to consolidate his dictatorship, several prominent Soviet leaders, such as Marshal Klimentii Voroshilov, continued to be acclaimed as heroes of the partisan movement.

Partisan warfare therefore was not an entirely new concept for the generation of Soviet citizens, or at least the Communist Party members among them, which experienced the German invasion of 1941. Nevertheless this generation was not psychologically prepared to carry on underground resistance against an occupying power. As the first secretary of the disadvantages. Although a guerrilla group can recover quickly from physical dispersion by the enemy, it may disintegrate if certain key leaders are eliminated, because, unlike a regular military force, it frequently has no alternative organization to which the survivors are bound to attach themselves. Since even the unimpaired guerrilla band is not a part of a permanent institutionalized body, serious problems of morale and discipline may arise. [See Chap. III.] Although these problems are outside the purview of this study, the role of the guerrilla unit within the general strategy of war is of real pertinence. Guerrilla operations against the enemy are of comparatively little value to the over-all war effort unless they can be coordinated from the center and directed against important objectives. This is especially true because guerrilla units, particularly when they operate near the homes of their members, tend to shun activity which would result in strong enemy reprisals. As a rule, actions which the enemy counters energetically are, of course, precisely those which would be of most value to the over-all war effort of the country to which the guerrillas belong. For the Soviet regime the importance of controls was even greater, since, unlike countries where the guerrillas have arisen in a spontaneous reaction to foreign invasion, the occupied Soviet zone tended at first to accept the German occupation passively.

Aside from the military value, however, an important advantage of centralized direction lies in the political field. In a guerrilla movement where centralized control is not effective, individual commanders tend to become a law unto themselves. At first the leader of a band passively evades the control exerted by the central authorities, then openly sets up an opposition center. Experiences of this sort were frequent in civil wars in countries like Mexico and China in the second and third decades of this century and during the civil war in Russia and the Ukraine. The Soviet rulers vividly remembered their experiences with guerrilla leaders like Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, who declared their allegiance to the Soviet regime when it seemed expedient to do so, but eventually had to be forcibly suppressed when they refused to conform to Soviet decrees. They were determined to prevent the reappearance of such centrifugal tendencies in the event of another protracted war in the Soviet Union. The emergence of independent leaders from among its own citizens is to a totalitarian regime almost as distasteful as the complete control of these citizens by a foreign invader.

In order to preserve the advantages of guerrilla activities and, at the same time to avoid their traditional pitfalls, the Soviet leadership during the Second World War employed two types of control which had been little used in earlier guerrilla warfare. Because it was the Soviet Union, a major industrial power, which was supporting the bands, modern technical devices like the airplane and the radio were available. Of equal or greater importance where the techniques of political and social control peculiar to the regime. The central subject of this chapter is the manner in which the organizational and control structure of the Soviet partisan movement evolved. One aspect concerns the application of established Soviet methods of control to the partisan movement; another is the manner in which the special circumstances of partisan warfare resulted in improvising new methods, or in modifying established ones. Taken in this way, the study of partisan warfare provides important insight into the functioning of the Soviet system under conditions of stress.

§II. The First Efforts of Partisan Organization

A. THE PREWAR SOVIET CONCEPT OF PARTISAN WARFARE

Partisan warfare occupied a fairly prominent place in several areas of Soviet thought during the interwar period. Military textbooks and courses in Red Army academies analyzed partisan operations of the Civil War period and occasionally referred to partisan activity in other periods or countries, such as the guerrilla war conducted against Napoleon in both Russia and Spain. Historical and political journals, especially those concerned with the history of the Communist Party, printed lengthy articles on the Red partisans of the Civil War. These articles analyzed the social and political background of the Civil War partisans and stressed political as well as military aspects of the movement.

[See Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), pp. 391-94.]

Partisan leaders were extolled as models of "militancy" and devotion to communism. While many of the Civil War partisan leaders sank into obscurity soon after the Soviet regime was firmly established or were purged during Stalin's efforts to consolidate his dictatorship, several prominent Soviet leaders, such as Marshal Kli-mentii Voroshilov, continued to be acclaimed as heroes of the partisan movement.

Partisan warfare therefore was not an entirely new concept for the generation of Soviet citizens, or at least the Communist Party members among them, which experienced the German invasion of 1941. Nevertheless, this generation was not psychologically prepared to carry on underground resistance against an occupying power. As the first secretary of the Chernigov Oblast Committee of the Communist Party, Aleksei Fyodorov, puts it in his memoirs, the very term "underground" seemed archaic and "bookish" to Party members who had lost all feeling for conspiratorial work during their twenty years of undisputed power.

[Aleksei Fyodorov, *Podpolnyi obkom deistvuyet* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Vooruzhyonnykh Sil Soyuza SSR, 1947), I, 15; see also Ivan Kozlov, *V krymskom podpolye: vospominaniya* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1947, pp. 10, 17-18.]

In part this may be explained by the fact that the regional Party officials apparently were unaware that higher Party authorities had drawn up plans for a clandestine organization to take over in the event of enemy occupation. When Fyodorov went to Kiev shortly after the outbreak of war to consult with Nikita Khrushchev, then first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party,

he was amazed to learn that such plans had indeed been made very much earlier at the all-union and union republic level of the Party.

[*Ibid.,* pp. 12-13. Some German reports refer to extensive Soviet prewar planning for partisan activity. However, these reports are either couched in vague terms, without specific evidence to support them, or are based on interrogations of low-ranking and obviously poorly informed members of partisan bands.]

Evidently, prewar planning was confined to generalized schemes worked out by the central Party authorities. The lack of detailed preparation at the regional and local level may seem to indicate an incredible lack of foresight, but it more probably was an inevitable corollary of the prevailing Soviet doctrine which envisaged a future war as an offensive campaign.

The overt signal for partisan organization was given in Stalin's radio speech of 3 July 1941. This lengthy address, dealing with many aspects of the war, contained one paragraph on partisan warfare:

In areas occupied by the enemy, guerrilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed; diversionist groups must be organized to combat the enemy troops, to foment guerrilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores, transports. In the occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step and all their measures frustrated.

[J. V. Stalin, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union* (New York: International Publishers, 1945), p. 15]

At about the same time, several agencies of the Soviet Government began feverish preparation for partisan activity. In all probability there was no formal coordinating body, although it is likely that the principal Party, Red Army, and NKVD officials concerned conferred from time to time on the roles that their respective departments should play. Such coordination is suggested by the fact that, in spite of certain ambiguities, the basic orders issued for the formation of the partisan movement indicate some general delineation of areas of responsibility.

B. THE TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

1. The Role of the Party

One of the major agencies involved in partisan organization during 1941 was the Communist Party itself. The Central Committee of the All-Union Party directed the formation of partisan units which were to parallel the existing territorial structure of the Party. Probably certain officials of the All-Union Party occupied themselves with this task from early July on, but there is no precise information on this point. Much more concrete evidence is available with respect to the organization of the partisan movement at the level of oblasts in the RSFSR and at the union republic level elsewhere.

[Since there was no separate Party organization for the RSFSR, its oblasts, krais, and autonomous republics constituted the level immediately below the AU-Union Party, nominally on a par with the Party organizations of the union republics. During 1941 partisan activity in the Karelo-Finnish, Moldavian, and the three Baltic republics was small, and little information is available concerning it. In the Belorus-sian republic, available material suggests that the oblast

Party organization, which was much smaller and less important than the Ukrainian oblast organization, played a comparatively minor role during the first months of the war.

The discussion in this section is centered on the territorial organization of the Party, consisting of the levels described above. More important cities had their own Party organizations, which in most respects were equivalent to the rayon, and in some cases even to the oblast territorial organizations. The larger cities were divided into urban rayons, or wards. The city Party organizations formed underground centers; and in some cities destruction battalions, which later furnished most of the manpower for partisan units, were formed either for the city as a whole, or in each ward. The major level at which partisan organization was carried out in most larger cities (both those which were occupied, and those like Leningrad which remained in Soviet hands) was the primary Party organization in individual enterprises. This was quite logical since the average factory, commercial enterprise, or transportation facility usually had as many Party members as an entire rural rayon. Apparently destruction battalions were not formed in the enterprises, but very similar home defense units known as civil air defense" or "home guards" were formed, and provided many of the recruits for the partisan detachments.

The Party organizations of certain major enterprises, such as sections of the railroad network, which extend across several rayons and connect various cities, were not subordinate to the usual territorial Party organization below the oblast level. In the development of the partisan movement, such Party organizations appear to have acted In a fashion similar to that of the urban enterprises, but under the direction of the oblast Party committee rather than the city Party committee.]

In the Ukraine, the secretaries of the Central Committee, Nikita Khrushchev, M. A. Burmistenko, and D. S. Korotchenko, directed the preparations, apparently without the assistance of an apparatus especially created for this purpose. For a time, as indicated above, their work was carried on in Kiev, which was not captured by the Germans until September 1941. Here Khrushchev and his assistants formed special organizations to direct the creation of partisan units in the oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR. In each oblast which was to have a partisan movement, a secretary of the oblast committee *(obkom)* was assigned this task.

[Fyodorov, p. 13. A list of the oblasts in which partisan secretaries were chosen may be found in a German intelligence report which is based on extensive partisan interrogations. (GFP Gr. 725, "Partisanen-Erfahrungsbericht," 22 January 1942, GMDS, HGeb 30910/37.) In practice, not all of the secretaries chosen could fulfill their assigned tasks; in the Ukraine west of the Dnepr and in most of Belorussia no oblast-wide organization could be formed during 1941.]

At the same time, another official was secretly appointed to the post of "underground secretary," and was ordered to remain behind to direct Party activities, including partisan organization, after the Germans arrived.

[In addition to the partisans and the NKVD diversionist network described below, a considerable underground organization of Party agents existed in some areas. They were under the direction of the underground secretary and apparently carried on sabotage and forays, in addition to propaganda activities.]

In many instances, it seems, this appointee was not one of the prominent Party officials, although there is one significant case in which the man so designated was the first secretary of the oblast. The person in question was Fyodorov, the Chernigov Oblast official mentioned above.

[Fyodorov, p. 13.]

Fyodorov maintains that he was given this appointment after urgently requesting it from Khrushchev; his record as a trouble shooter in the Communist organization of the Ukraine suggests, however, that there may have been other reasons. Several bits of evidence support the assumption that persons like Fyodorov, who had been in close contact with the NKVD while performing certain disciplinary tasks within the Party, were considered particularly well suited for the job of organizing the partisans.

[According to his own account Fyodorov had fought in the Red Army during the Civil War, but had not entered the Party until 1927, after which he gradually rose in the trade union apparatus. He later became a member of the control commission in Chernigov Oblast, then second secretary of the oblast Party committee, and in 1938 —shortly after the major purges—first secretary. During the war he and his band were sent to re-establish Soviet authority in the Rovno and Volhynia Oblasts, an especially difficult assignment in view of the hostility of the population to the Soviet system. After the war he acted as first secretary in several oblasts. As noted below, the director of the underground in the Crimean ASSR (where organizational arrangements were somewhat different) had been chief of the cadre section of the Party, i.e., in charge of personnel problems which involved disciplinary-matters.]

2. The Role of the NKVD

Several features of the Party underground organization made it especially necessary that those in charge be capable of working in harmony with the NKVD. One major component of the underground was a network of diversionist groups. This network, which was to cover the entire occupied territory, but was especially important in urban areas, was organized by the territorial NKVD, usually from NKVD informants or agents. It remained under direct control of NKVD officials who stayed behind in the occupied regions. Apparently its connection with the Party underground was maintained only at the oblast level.

[See Kozlov, p. 17; see also this book,-Chap. V, Sect. I.]

The network consisted of groups of three to seven persons each (including many women). It was designed primarily for sabotage and other disruptive tasks ordered by the Soviet authorities. The members continued their usual occupations as covers for their clandestine activities. For further protection, eacn group member was permitted to know only the leader of his group, who, in turn, knew only his group members and hischief at the next higher level.

There was no organizational connection between the diversionist network and the partisan movement, because the former was specifically required to avoid risking discovery by contact with elements overtly hostile to the-Germans, such as the partisans. In practice, however, many diversionist group members did find it necessary to depend on the partisan bands for assistance and refuge. [See Chap. V, Sect. I.]

A second activity of the NKVD did have a direct bearing on the partisan movement. On 26 June 1941, Lavrentii Beria, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD), ordered the NKVD rayon organizations to form home defense units known as "Destruction Battalions" *(Istrebitelnye Bataliony)*. [See Chap. VII, Sect. I, B.] According to this order, the destruction battalions were to be of company size (100-200 men), and the rank and file largely comprised men too old, too young, or otherwise unfit for duty with the Red Army. At the same time, the officers and a large part of the enlisted men were NKVD officials or trusted Party members. The direction remained in the hands of the rayon or inter-rayon NKVD 'organization, though the Red Army cooperated by providing arms and possibly by furnishing training staffs in some instances.

It is probable that the destruction battalions had been planned considerably before the outbreak of war, at a time when the extent and rapidity of the German penetration of Soviet territory could not be foreseen. They were primarily defensive units, charged with guarding important installations to prevent sabotage or attacks by German parachutists. However, at least as early as July 1941, NKVD orders provided that the destruction battalions in areas near the front should be transformed into partisan detachments. In this transformation, the NKVD officials were to cooperate with the territorial Party organization, which, as indicated above, was formally assigned control over the partisan movement. Nevertheless, the NKVD was given the extremely important task of screening persons considered for membership in the partisan units. [See Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B, 2, c] In practice, a rayon Party secretary was selected by the oblast Party committee to direct the organization of the partisan movement in his rayon. He was confirmed by the union republic central committee of the Party.

[For the RSFSR the confirming agency was the All-Union Central Committee.]

To assist in the work of organization and possibly to carry on other semi-military work, a "military section" of the rayon Party apparatus, which had been organized down to the rayon level before the war, was available. Throughout the period of partisan organization and development, however, it is readily apparent that the NKVD played a most significant role. The officers of the otryads ["Otryad" can mean either "detachment" in a general sense, or (as for example in the Red Army) specifically, "company."], as the newly formed partisan units were called, were, like those of the destruction battalions from which they were largely drawn, trusted adherents of the Soviet system. While a majority appear to have been Party or Government officials, about one-third were NKVD officers. The rank and file of the otryads were also reliable men; the less useful elements of the destruction battalions, including those either unwilling to face the dangers of partisan life or physically unfit for rigorous living conditions, were dismissed. A high proportion of the remaining partisans consisted of Komsomol members too young for military service.

3. The Otryad in Operation

Not all partisan otryads were formed from destruction battalions; in some instances the territorial Party organization formed otryads by direct recruitment of men considered desirable, without drawing on the home defense formations of the NKVD. In a number of the larger cities no destruction battalions were formed; instead similar home defense units served as the basis for partisan recruitment. [See n. 5.] A number of special methods were also employed in forming partisan otryads, corresponding usually to exceptional branches of the Party structure. During the first months of the war, however, the destruction battalions were apparently the major source of manpower for partisan detachments in the nonurban rayons throughout the occupied Soviet Union.

Once formed, the otryad withdrew to an inaccessible spot and established a concealed and fortified camp. Apparently the original plans envisaged the operation of one or more such otryads in each rayon, or at least the concentration of a few otryads from neighboring rayons in one well-protected hide-out.

[Fyodorov, pp. 18, 19, 68; see also Sidor Artemovich Kovpak, *Ot Putivlya do Karpat* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Detskoi Literatury Narkomprosa RSFSR, 1945), pp. 5, 9.]

In one case, a special "oblast otryad" was formed to act as a nucleus for the partisan movement and as a guard for its oblast headquarters.

[Fyodorov, p. 22.]

It appears, however, that the initial plan provided for general direction of the partisan movement in oblasts not immediately adjacent to the army fronts by the underground Party secretary and his staff. This staff was not to join an otryad but was to remain in hiding.

Presumably the rayon otryad commander was to direct specific harassing operations, while the underground secretary was to receive and pass on general directives from the union republic committee on the Soviet side of the front. This is only speculation, however, for the general system of control over the territorial partisan movement never really operated. A considerable number of rayon otryads withdrew as planned to their hideouts and began operations against the German forces. In one case, at least, the underground oblast secretary visited the partisans in his region and issued directives, but he soon disappeared. In other cases, the contact with the designated underground secretary was never established, for the secretary was captured immediately by the Germans, or was swept out of his oblast in the general confused retreat of the Red Army. A lack of adequate radio equipment prevented most rayon otryads from establishing direct contact with the unoccupied areas of the Soviet Union. As a result, most otryads in areas distant from the battle fronts were unable to coordinate their operations with any over-all plan.

If the territorial system of organization had succeeded, the Germans would have been confronted with a network of small partisan detachments in every administrative subdivision of the occupied Soviet Union. Such bands, operating on their home territory, would have been extremely important not only because of the material damage they could have inflicted, but also because they were foci for political resistance to the occupier. The potential political importance of such a system undoubtedly helps explain the major roles accorded the Party and the NKVD in efforts to develop it. In practice, however, such a pervasive network of partisan bands could not be established. It is necessary, therefore, in order to assess the real value of the initial movement, to examine the ways in which the territorial formations were adapted to a different basis of partisan organization.

C. THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT AND THE RED ARMY

It is clear from NKVD and Party directives that the territorial partisan organization was intended to operate in cooperation with the Red Army; such orders emphasized repeatedly that special attention should be given to the organization of partisans in areas near the fronts. At the same time, the Army authorities were ready to adapt the partisan bands organized by the Party territorial apparatus to their own military needs. The military council (soviet) of the Northwest Front [One of three Soviet Fronts (army groups) operating in the first weeks of the war. Probably the others issued similar directives] issued an order envisaging the formation of partisan units on a territorial basis: "It is desired that each administrative rayon should contain at least one partisan combat unit." At the same time, the order placed great emphasis on the military utilization of the partisans. It tended to regard the territorial system merely as a framework for the formation of units to be employed as army auxiliaries:

First and foremost, partisan detachments and diversionist groups must be established in the main operating areas, that is, the areas of greatest concentration of the enemy. . . . The operations must be carried out in areas in which forests furnish cover for the units. Such an area can consist of up to two or three administrative rayons; operations are to be carried out only against the main lines of communication of the enemy. . . .—*Appendix, Document 2.*

For a brief time in June and July 1941, the task of utilizing the partisan movement for military purposes was assigned to the NKVD "OO" section of the Red Army, but after mid-July the job was assumed by the Political Administration sections of the army staffs.

[The Political Administration was charged with propaganda and indoctrination within the Red Army. The existence of a brief period of NKVD control is asserted by Zhigunov, NKVD officer with an army staff (interrogation of 24 April 1942). Zhigunov also reported the transfer to Political Administration supervision, a change which is confirmed by the fact that as early as 13 July 1941 the Administration of Political Propaganda of the Northwest Front submitted a report on the organization of partisan units to General Lev Mekhlis, head of the Main Administration of Political Propaganda of the Red Army. [See Appendix, Document 4.]]

In practice, the Political Administrations of different armies appear to have employed varying methods in utilizing the territorially formed partisan units. In one army on the West Front, a battalion commissar was assigned the task of liaison with partisan units in his area of military operations. The commissar admits in his memoirs that he had previously known nothing about partisan warfare, and that he was told by the chairman of the military council of the West Front that until shortly before his assignment no one in the Front command had taken partisan activity seriously. Now, however, the Army authorities felt that the partisans could assist militarily and were therefore prepared to furnish arms, advice, and cadres. The commissar held conferences with the rayon Party committee in the area in which his army was operating, presenting the army position to the Party secretary, the commander of the rayon military section, the representatives of the village soviets, and the plenipotentiary of the NKVD.

[V. Andreyev, *Narodnaya voina (zapiski partizana)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1952), p. 49.]

The army commissar was not impressed by the ability of his new associates, however, and practical cooperation appears to have been minimal. Even if the basis for joint action had been more promising, it is probable that the rapid retreat of the armies from this area would have rendered extensive cooperation with the territorial partisans impossible.

Farther to the north and to the south, however, the territorial units were utilized to a greater extent by the Red Army. The Political Administrations of army formations on the Northwest Front actively cooperated with the rayon Party apparatuses, and even sent officers to assist in organizing partisan detachments. Probably some of these detachments remained in the rayons in which they were formed, but others, after they had been recruited by the Party committees, were transferred to the Red Army for training and equipment. After completing their training, the units were placed under the operational control of the staff of the Northwest Front, which used them for scouting in the rear of the Germans.

A similar pattern evolved in the northern section of the West Front— but with some interesting variations. In Smolensk Oblast, the "Western Railways Administration" joined the oblast Party committee in the formation of a partisan detachment from among the railroad workers. [See n. 5, concerning the status of party organization in such transportation enterprises.] Apparently the "OO" (NKVD) section of the railways administration was actually assigned the organizational task. After it was formed, the otryad was trained, presumably under army direction, and was turned over to the military command for operational purposes. As the commissar of the unit, a man chosen by the NKVD and the Party organization, stated shortly after the otryad had completed its training, an "army commissar and a high staff officer" gave the following instructions:

1. The detachment is to operate in the general direction of Gusin.

2. The tasks of the detachment are destruction and sabotage in the rear of the German forces.

3. Liaison is to be with the staff of the central [part of the ?] West Front.

a. The liaison point is to be in the village of Kovshi.

b. Contact is to take place on the 25th of each month.

c. The password is "Haven't you seen any horses here?"; the countersign is "The horses have left Kovshi."

This detachment was undoubtedly considered to be of special value to the Red Army in attacking German communications, since it was composed of technically experienced men. Its importance and the close control exercised by the army command are indicated by the fact that a Red Army officer was detailed to guide the unit through the front lines and that it was then placed under the supervision of an army commissar assigned to direct disruptive activities in the enemy occupied area. In a similar fashion, the South Front employed territorially formed partisan units to establish a center for disruptive activities in the Nikopol area.

The partisan units just described, while trained and directed by the Red Army, were used in the administrative divisions from which they were recruited. A somewhat different system was followed in Leningrad, which was besieged, but never occupied. There units of up to regimental size were formed by the Party organizations in the factories and were provided with Party officials as commissars and with men of military background as leaders. They were turned over to the Northwest Front command for training, and when they were sufficiently prepared were sent through the enemy lines by the Front command. Once in occupied territory, the large formations were broken up into battalions of 100-200 men each (apparently this size, corresponding to that of the rayon otryad, was considered most efficient for operational purposes), and carried on activities under the control of the Front command.

[A very interesting personal account of the way in which a member of the Leningrad Factory Air Defense organization (apparently similar to the destruction battalion) was recruited for a partisan unit is contained in OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt. K., Verw., "Tagebuch eines Partisanen," 31 October 1941 (GMDS, H 17/218).]

There were also a number of partisan detachments led by officers who had been selected by the Party organizations in large unoccupied urban centers such as Moscow; they were trained by the Red Army and were then used to carry out partisan-type missions of strategic significance. Party cadres from the unoccupied regions played a more important role in organizing local units in German-occupied territory; they will be discussed below.

Not all the men sent across the lines by the Red Army were ordered to act as partisans. Many parachutists were hastily recruited and trained, then dropped in an indiscriminate fashion, evidently with the hope that some would succeed in sabotaging German installations. Other parachute and infiltration units were composed of regular Red Army personnel, including many staff officers, and were sent on specific commando missions such as the destruction of enemy communications and the collection of information. These elements were of some importance in the partisan movement since they frequently found it necessary to join partisan bands when they

could not make their way back to the Soviet lines. During 1941, however, they were of little significance.

D. THE FATE OF THE TERRITORIAL PARTISAN ORGANIZATION

During 1941 the territorial detachments were of minor importance everywhere even when, as noted above, they could be used by the Red Army for specific military missions. As the Germans established firm control over their newly won sections of the huge areas of the USSR, a large number of rayon bands vanished. Many seem to have dissolved of their own accord to escape the threat of physical destruction. Consequently, during the first four months of the war, the number of territorially organized partisans seems to have declined steadily. Later, more favorable conditions probably enabled a number of the remaining rayon Party organisers to re-form their partisan groups and allowed the existing groups to recruit new members. By that time, however, the territorial detachments in most areas were far outdistanced by detachments formed through the efforts of outside organizers, as described below. Before turning to this phase of partisan organization, however, it is necessary to consider the important regional differences in the outcome of the territorial system.

1. The Northern Regions

While there were some rayon detachments in the northern regions— corresponding roughly to the area north of the Brest-Chernigov-Kursk line—they were of little relative importance after 1941 because of the enormous influx of other elements into the partisan movement. Territorial detachments which continued to operate in their own rayons were most important in areas of Belorussia remote from the front. In other sections the rayon otryads frequently survived but operated in areas other than those in which they had been formed.

In most areas some vestige of the territorial system survived. In the northern Ukraine the names of the rayons were kept as detachment designations even after the original personnel had largely been replaced. In most areas, the surviving members of the territorial bands were important in providing a nucleus of trusted Party and NKVD functionaries in the expanded partisan movement. These men played a significant part in maintaining the allegiance of the partisans to the Communist system and could also be used to assist in re-establishing Party control over the civilian population in the areas where the partisans operated. This was the case in Chernigov Oblast, where Aleksei Fyodorov headed territorial partisan bands which became the nucleus for a major partisan group. For a time Fyodorov and his lieutenants from the oblast apparatus directed underground Party activity among the civilian population in addition to acting as partisan officers. However, the partisans were unable to remain within the oblast, where the terrain is not favorable enough to permit protracted evasion of superior forces. By early 1943 the top Soviet authorities were also anxious to transfer most of the large Ukrainian partisan bands to the area west of the Dnepr. Consequently, in the spring of 1943, Fyodorov's group was transferred to the western oblasts of the Ukraine; there he was able to play an important part in the political as well as the military restoration of Soviet authority in this area, which, since it had not come under Soviet rule until 1939, was a difficult yet important region to bring under Communist influence.

In many areas, however, the territorial Party officials did not become leaders of partisan bands. Especially in areas where Red Army influence was great, the Party territorial apparatus relinquished control of the operations of the partisan units and confined itself to political indoctrination, stimulation of morale, and cooperation in disciplinary measures. Its functions were similar to those performed by the territorial Party organizations for Red Army units within their areas, although in most cases the rudimentary development of political control and

indoctrination in the partisan bands gave the territorial Party organization a somewhat wider scope.

2. The Steppe

The territorial partisan detachments in the occupied regions of the south were less fortunate than those in the northern regions. Since by far the larger part of the south consists of open steppes, the system of rayon otryads operating in close proximity to their home districts soon proved impractical. The otryad had to seek any available shelter, even though it might be scores or hundreds of miles away from its original rayon. At the same time, the unfavorable terrain, which hindered the implementation of the territorial organization plan, prevented the development of a mass partisan movement. On the open plains isolated Red Army soldiers, who in the north could have hidden in the woods or swamps until they could join partisan bands, were quickly rounded up by the Germans. Disgruntled peasants had little incentive to flee their villages, for no secure shelter was available. As a result, the territorial detachments remained relatively more important in this area even though in absolute numbers they remained insignificant.

Even in the first weeks of the war little partisan activity was apparent in the Ukrainian steppes west of the Dnepr. The advancing German forces encountered some bands in the woods and marshes along the rivers. Apparently these were similar to the band at Nikopol [see Chap. XI], but were much smaller and possibly were under Party rather than Army direction. Only scant information is available on the principal center of partisan operations west of the Dnepr, in the "Black Forest" near Cherkassy. This wood was evidently a gathering point for partisans from a considerable area of the central Ukraine; apparently the band was liquidated by early 1942, but nothing is known of its organization. Smaller bands east of the Dnepr in the scattered forest of Kiev and Poltava Oblasts were evidently under the control of the underground Party and NKVD structures. [See Appendix, Document 5.] They also vanished by early 1942, with the members possibly seeking refuge in the deeper woods to the north. Small groups in the forests of Kharkov Oblast were liquidated by Ukrainian auxiliaries of the Germans in late 1942. A succession of small bands appeared in the Donbas, but they were apparently sent in by the Red Army.

Although the territorial partisan organization in the steppes of the Ukraine appears to have been completely destroyed by early 1942, disruptive activities continued to be carried out by underground groups, especially in the cities. The underground Party committee in Kiev was apparently even able to direct the activities of one partisan band in the forested northern edge of the oblast. The underground groups carried out sabotage, and probably served as auxiliaries to spies sent in from the unoccupied USSR. Their most important function, however, was to impress the population with the omnipresent shadow of Soviet control. Although these activities lie outside the scope of this study, it is worth noting that by performing them the undergrounds filled part of the role played by the partisans farther north.

3. The Crimea

Probably utilizing the experience of their counterparts farther north, the Party and NKVD apparatuses of the Crimea were able to retain the territorial framework for recruitment and organization of otryads, yet to adapt it to the special geographic conditions of the peninsula. In order to utilize the most favorable terrain, the otryads were transferred sometimes over very considerable distances; the practice of maintaining the otryad for operations in or near the district where it was formed was abandoned at the outset. Moreover, a carefully planned system of command, the Staff of the Crimean Partisan Movement, combining over-all direction with flexibility of operation, was present from the start; the unworkable attempt at control by an underground oblast committee physically separate from the partisan forces was abandoned

entirely. In addition, the system of organization by "rayons" (a special term referring to a partisan command superior to the otryad but subordinate to the staff) maintained some vestige of connection with the territorial administrative divisions, while permitting sufficient flexibility to enable the incorporation of large numbers of former military and naval personnel in both officer and rank-and-file positions.

The Crimean partisan movement remained an effective force in spite of severe handicaps until 1944. In the last months of its existence, possibly as part of a standardization effort, the territorial organization appears to have been altered somewhat to conform more closely to the quasi-military forms prevalent elsewhere. That the territorial form was able to persist so long and that it apparently enjoyed the sanction of higher authorities indicates that this type of organization cannot be dismissed either as universally unviable or as definitely rejected by the Soviet regime. As will be shown, the introduction of this form of organization in a new area of occupation as late as the summer of 1942 furnishes additional support for the belief that the Soviet authorities were reluctant to abandon it.

4. The North Caucasus

The German armies first entered the North Caucasus region in the summer of 1942, at a time when the territorial partisan organization in most occupied areas of the Soviet Union had been reduced to a subsidiary branch of the total movement. Consequently it is of interest that the partisan organization in the Caucasus region followed the familiar territorial pattern. Destruction battalions were organized by the NKVD in many of the rayons of Rostov Oblast, Krasnodar and Stavropol Krais, and the Kabardino-Balkhar SSR, and were transformed into partisan units under the direction of the Party and NKVD apparatuses. Unlike most of the earlier rayon partisan otryads, however, most of these groups made no effort to operate in the immediate vicinity of their home territory, but evacuated at once to the favorable terrain of the Caucasus Mountains and their foothills. Each otryad retained its identity and usually established a separate camp, but several otryads were placed under the command of a "kust."

[A headquarters corresponding apparently to the brigade or "unification" in the north, and the "rayon" in the Crimea. In the Caucasus, too, the term "unification" was occasionally used to describe the headquarters.]

There was no partisan operative headquarters above the kust. Operational directives were apparently given by the army headquarters in whose general area the kust worked, while over-all control remained in the hands of either the krai or oblast Party organization, or the partisan staffs for the territorial divisions. Apparently there was also some remote subordination to the staff of the "Partisan Movement of the South."

In numbers and effectiveness the Caucasus partisans formed a very insignificant part of the entire partisan movement. Most of the bands disappeared after the German retreat to the Kuban bridgehead in the winter of 1942-43, but a few remained operative in that region until the Germans evacuated in the autumn of 1943. Apparently the chain of command of these small groups remained predominantly in the hands of the Party; an intermediary kust between the otryad and the Party committee existed for a time. Later the staff of the "Partisan Movement of the South" sent in a single otryad to reorganize the depleted partisan force in this area.

The persistence of the territorial framework of partisan organization in the Crimea and its extension to the Caucasus some time after major changes had been made in the partisan structure farther north suggest that the Soviet authorities considered this system desirable. The most likely reason was apparently its usefulness in integrating the partisan movement into the Party and

NKVD political control mechanism. Quite probably the increasing control over the partisan movement exerted by the Red Army, which assumed direction of many of the surviving territorial detachments during the winter 1941-42, caused some misgivings among Soviet leaders, who possibly feared an overextension of the Army's prestige and power. In this respect the later developments of the territorial partisan movement form only one part of the broader picture of the transformation of the partisan movement and the changes introduced to reinforce Party influence.

§III. Expansion and Reorganization of the Partisan Movement, 1942-44

A. THE REVIVAL OF THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT, EARLY 1942

It has already been noted that the original Soviet intention to develop a network of resistance groups which would deny the Germans control of the areas evacuated by the Red Army was not realized. Nevertheless, a combination of circumstances, most of them unanticipated by the Soviet regime, made possible a revival of the partisan movement during the winter of 1941-42, though on lines considerably different from those originally planned.

One of these circumstances was the scale of the Soviet defeats. The Soviet authorities had not, of course, anticipated the great encirclement battles, or *Kesselschlachten,* which resulted in cutting off several million soldiers from the body of the Red Army forces. Over two million of these men were soon rounded up by the Germans and consigned to prisoner-of-war camps. Such was the fate of the vast majority of the troops trapped in the Uman pocket on the Ukrainian steppe west of the Dnepr and of most of those cut off in the Poltava steppe east of Kiev. In the forest and swamp area of German Army Groups Center and North, however, many eluded capture. This was true of numerous isolated survivors of the two pockets near Bryansk and of the other five encirclement battles on the road to Moscow—Grodno, Minsk, Smolensk, Roslavl, and Vyazma. Some of the soldiers who escaped from the battlefields were members of small units which had become separated from their higher commands but still remained under the control of their own officers. In other cases, Red Army or NKVD officers who escaped alone or with a few followers rallied stragglers, whom they induced to become part of an *ad hoc* military formation—either through their authority as representatives of the Soviet regime or through force of personality. These two types of groups frequently endeavored to make their way to the main battle front in order to rejoin the Red Army, but they were often unsuccessful because of the rapid retreat of the Soviet forces. Many then disintegrated although others remained intact in remote areas, generally inactive and primarily concerned with their own preservation, yet unready to submit to German rule. There were also hundreds of thousands of Red Army men and officers who had lost contact with any sort of regular authority and frequently made their way about in small groups for self-protection. In addition, thousands of Red Army men who had been cut off behind the German lines made their way home, where they attempted to merge with the civilian population, or simply lingered in an out-of-the-way village, sheltered perhaps by lonely peasant women.

Several hundred thousand ex-soldiers living illegally and without supervision in the occupied areas would have made it difficult for an occupier to maintain order under any circumstances, and the policies pursued by the Germans greatly increased the danger. [For details of German treatment of population and partisans, see Chap. III, Sect. I, A, 1-4.] For this potential danger to become a real threat to the Germans it was necessary that the masses of men available for partisan activities be organized by leaders determined to conduct systematic attacks against the occupation forces. One source of leadership was the surviving territorial otryad, which was able to take advantage of this situation by swelling its ranks with former Red Army men; at the same time numerous small underground groups of Party officials who until this time had been unable

to organize real partisan bands could now form detachments from the ex-soldiers. More important, probably, were the line officers, commissars, and NKVD officers to be found among the isolated troops. The latter two groups, at least, knew that German policy called for their execution upon capture; consequently they had no choice but continued evasion or resistance. As noted above, officers had formed bands of cut-off Red Army men from the beginning, but there often was a tendency among such groups merely to stay alive when they could not cross the front to rejoin the main Soviet forces. At first many of the rank and file tended to melt away, but, when it became clear that surrender to the Germans or endeavors at individual evasion involved even greater risks than partisan activity, they more readily submitted to the authority of the officers.

In the long run the isolated Red Army and NKVD officers were to become a key element in the revival of the partisan movement. In spite of the fact, however, that the former Red Army rank and file rapidly developed a willingness to participate in anti-German activities, the operations which could be initiated and directed by individuals or small groups of officers who had for months been out of contact with the Soviet authorities were limited. In order for them to become part of an effective partisan force it was necessary to have organizers provided with definite instructions for the pursuance of resistance activities and equipped with means for maintaining contact with the unoccupied areas of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the presence of such organizers, determined to form a partisan movement regardless of the cost to the population of the occupied areas and endowed with the prestige of being direct representatives of the Soviet regime, was essential in many areas in order to induce the former Red Army personnel to fight the Germans, even after a generally negative attitude toward the latter had developed.

There is little doubt that the higher levels of the Soviet regime became aware of the situation in the occupied areas by the fall of 1941 and that they made plans to take advantage of it. In numerous areas of the unoccupied USSR, special training camps for partisans who were to be sent into the occupied areas by parachute had been set up as early as August 1941. Personnel assigned to these camps fell into several categories. At first most of those intended as officers or partisan organizers were apparently selected by Party organizations from among trusted members, including a number of fairly high officials. Party apparatuses in large urban centers of the RSFSR, especially the huge organization in Moscow, were particularly useful for recruiting.

[L. Tsanava, *Vsenarodnaya partizanskaya voina v belorussii protiv fashistskikh zakhvatchikov* (Minsk: Gosizdat BSSR, 1949, Vol. I; 1951, Vol. II), II., 30; G. Lin-kov, *Voina v tylu vraga* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1951), pp. 14-17.]

Later in the fall, the large mass of Party and NKVD functionaries who had fled or had been evacuated from the occupied regions furnished an additional important source of recruits. Evidently these men were assigned to partisan warfare in part because of contacts in their former areas of activity, and in part to expiate their "sin" of flight before the enemy. Similarly, in the fall a large number of the subordinate partisan trainees were chosen from among Red Army soldiers who had become separated from their units but who were still on the Soviet side of the front, while during the summer most of the rank and file were evidently drawn from men already inducted into the Red Army. [See Chap. VII, Sect. II and Sect. IV, B; Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B, 1 and 2; Chap. IX, Sect. III.]

While it may be presumed that the selected Party personnel were given intensive briefing by Party officials on the political and military implications of their new assignment, the technical training was conducted by the Red Army and the NKVD. It lasted about two weeks only and consisted of very limited instruction in parachuting and the use of demolition materials. However, special effort appears to have been made to recruit radio operators and other enlisted

men familiar with special techniques needed by the groups, so that extensive training was not imperative in all fields.

[Linkov, p. 11.]

After training, the recruits were divided into small groups of less than platoon size led by a commander, a commissar, possibly other officers, and including at least one radio operator and other specialists. The officers were assigned ordinary Red Army ranks. From the training camps the

groups so formed were sent to a Red Army headquarters—apparently a Front headquarters—were given specific instructions, and were assigned in area of operation into which they were dropped by parachute.

[*Ibid.,* pp. 19, 30, 74.]

Upon reaching these areas, the small parachutist groups first endeavored to contact persons loyal to the Soviet system whose names had been furnished by the Soviet authorities before the group's flight into occupied territory. Often these persons were members of the Party underground, and, of course, many of them had disappeared during the weeks following the Soviet evacuation from their districts. Even more often, apparently, they were minor Soviet officials or Party members who had exhibited no great desire to run the risks of resistance activity, but could be persuaded nonetheless to cooperate with the parachute teams. To secure such cooperation, the teams were given authority over all Soviet and Party organizations, including whatever partisans might exist, in their area of operations.

[*Ibid.,* pp. 31, 69, 109.]

They also bore the prestige of direct representatives of the central authorities, especially of the Red Army command. Equally important, probably, they were usually in direct contact with the latter by radio.

[*Ibid.,* p. 73.]

The parachute teams set about reorganizing the Soviet sympathizers into a network of agents and using others as recruiters or cadres for partisan detachments. Most of the partisans, however, were drawn from the cutoff Red Army personnel, to whom the authority of the parachutists as Red Army officers representing a high headquarters was especially important. For several months, however, until the beginning of winter, the parachutist teams were concerned primarily with contacting local supporters and groups of Red Army men and officers in the woods, rather than with developing a large-scale partisan movement. During December the severe German reverses before Moscow produced a profound effect on the opinion of the great majority of the population of the occupied territories. [See Chap. IV, Sect. VII, A.]

Almost simultaneously, the tactical conditions for large-scale partisan operations improved greatly. The Germans denuded the rear areas of troops in order to bolster their collapsing front. This left their lines of communication vulnerable at the very time when the uninterrupted flow of supplies to the front was most vital. At the same time, the partisans could be reinforced by the Red Army on a large scale through gaps which developed in the German lines. One principal gap east of Vitebsk—the so-called Vitebsk Corridor—served as the gateway for thousands of partisans, many of whom were recruited from among evacuees of that area. The Kirov gap farther south furnished large numbers of partisans for the region between Bryansk and Vyazma.

By using these gaps, it was possible to send in not only organizers and technicians but also whole units of partisans who could reinforce those recruited within the occupied territory.

[Tsanava II, p. 28; see also this book, Chap. VIII, Sect. II, A, 2.]

In addition, supplies and reinforcements were sent through the front in places where difficult terrain and troop shortages made it impossible for the Germans to maintain a continuous line.

Aided by the increased Soviet prestige after the winter victories, the various groups of organizers were able to transform a considerable proportion of the former Red Army men plus recruits, especially adolescents who had never been in the Army, into a partisan movement of substantial size. At the same time, it must be stressed that a very large proportion of men falling into these categories never joined the partisans and many actively collaborated with the Germans. The patterns followed in various areas differed considerably, however. In Leningrad Oblast numerous Party-organized partisan detachments were sent through the front line from early autumn on [see Sect. II, above]; no major encirclements had taken place in this area, and apparently most of the other recruits for the partisan movement in the winter of 1941-42 came from local village inhabitants. As indicated, partisan organizers and detachments sent through the gaps in the front lines were especially important in the part of Orel Oblast north of Bryansk, in Smolensk Oblast, and in Vitebsk Oblast. In the southern part of Orel Oblast and the adjoining districts of the Ukraine, on the other hand, surviving territorial Party officials and Red Army and NKVD officers cut off in the encirclements played the major role in organizing the partisan movement. [See subsection F, below.] The parachute teams were relatively most important in the south-central areas of Belorus-sia, inaccessible to the Soviet side by land, where the territorial partisan organization had been severely crippled.

While in area this region comprised only a small part of the occupied territories, its central location and favorable terrain made it a major factor in the later development of partisan activity. Consequently it is reasonable to assume that the use of parachute teams in this region exerted an influence out of proportion to the number of men included in them, or the area to which they were assigned. [See subsections E and H, 2, below.]

B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTISAN BAND

Before discussing the repercussions of the rapid growth of the partisan movement during the winter of 1941-42 on the higher levels of control, it is necessary to describe the development of the basic unit of partisan warfare; its organization exerted great influence on the future conduct of partisan operations. Necessary as such a generalized picture is, however, it is likely to be misleading unless one remembers that from the beginning to the end of this period (1942-44) hundreds of bands existed and that no two were exactly alike. Hence it must be stressed that variety, not uniformity, was the characteristic of the partisan movement, and the broad tendencies of size, organization, and command described in this section do not represent a uniform pattern but offer merely generalizations derived from the study of numerous examples.

[The generalized description of the growth of the partisan band is based on a large number of sources, including in particular the memoirs by Tsanava, Andreyev, Linkov, Fyodorov, Kovpak; as well as Dmitrii Medvedev, *Silnye dukhom* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Voennogo Ministerstva Soyuza SSR, 1951); Anatolii Shyyan, *Partyzanskyi krai* (Kiev: Ukrainske Derzhavne Vydavnystvo, 1946); and P. Vershi-gora, *Lyudi s chistoi sovestyu* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1951). These discuss the growth and formation of numerous individual bands. For additional descriptions of the development of such bands, see Chap. VIII, Sect. II, A, I; Chap. IX, Sect. III.]

The various ways in which partisan detachments originated have been outlined above. By the winter of 1941-42, when they were actually ready to begin operating as a partisan band, however, most detachments, whatever their origin, were of somewhat similar size (20-200 men) and organization.

[This statement as well as the following description of the typical development of the partisan band applies to most of the groups in the major areas of partisan concentration throughout the greater part of Belorussia and the Bryansk forest, and to many bands in Smolensk, Kalinin, and Leningrad Oblasts. Conditions differed considerably in areas where the territorial framework of Party organization was dominant from the beginning (Crimea and North Caucasus; see this chapter, Sect. II, D) and in areas where military control and organization were especially significant (the areas east of Smolensk and parts of the northern Bryansk forest; see this chapter, Sect. Ill, F)]

The key personalities were the commander and the commissar. While the commander, who more frequently than not had been chosen because of his special military training or prestige in the area where the group was organized, was nominally the supreme authority, sometimes the commissar was the real director of the unit. [For an example, see Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B, 1.] The background of these men and of whatever other officers were included in the group varied according to the band's origin. They could be territorial Party or NKVD officials, Red Army line or staff officers, Red Army commissars, officers of NKVD sections of the Army, and in a very few cases persons from minor positions such as managers of small industrial establishments or kolkhoz officials. Whatever their origin, their importance can scarcely be exaggerated. It was they who made the decision to organize resistance to the Germans at a time when the rapid Soviet retreat made such activity extremely dubious. These former members of the Soviet hierarchy based their decision either on loyalty to the Soviet regime or on fear of falling into German hands. If they were not parachutists, frequently they had been hidden by sympathizers or had lived in small fugitive groups in the woods for months before they could organize their bands. The parachutist leaders achieved quicker results, but were exposed to equal perils in areas with which they often were not familiar. As much through force of personality as through rank, the partisan leaders whipped their units together and controlled them with great firmness, and when necessary with violent methods.

[Postwar Soviet partisan accounts sometimes assert that the surviving territorial Party organizations controlled the partisan bands during this period, either as underground directing centers or as staffs actually present with the bands. Available contemporary evidence and close analysis of the Soviet memoirs themselves, however,

indicate that at least during the winter of 1941-42 the few surviving underground Party committees led too precarious an existence to act as effective directors of the partisan movement. On the other hand, in cases where the committees permanently joined partisan bands, they were usually, if not invariably, subject to the control of the commander and the commissar in all operational matters, although they (like the *ad hoc* Party organizations soon formed in most other partisan bands) were given such functions as political indoctrination and assistance in maintaining morale and discipline. While the territorial Party organization as such declined in influence, in a number of cases individual members held positions of extreme importance in the partisan bands; several were even commanders or commissars. Consequently, it would be incorrect to minimize the importance of the territorial Party organization as an element contributing to the development of the partisan movement. (See Fyo-dorov, pp. 192, 194, 319; Tsanava I, 109; II, 331; Andreyev, pp. 181, 208; Linkov, pp. 305, 378.)]

The subordinate partisan commanders had origins similar to those of commander and commissar, though they were drawn as a rule from somewhat lower levels of the Soviet hierarchy and included, for example, a large number of Komsomol officials, kolkhoz chairmen, and minor Party and Soviet officials. Frequently they lacked the determination as well as the organizing ability and technical qualifications of the top leaders of the bands. Many were either weeded out as the partisan movement grew or remained in comparatively insignificant posts, although a few showed unusual capacity for the special activities of partisan warfare and advanced rapidly. During the early stage these men in many cases exerted considerable personal influence over the members of their units, who frequently were drawn from one small community or had developed feelings of comradeship while they were hiding out in the woods before entering the partisan band.

In the next stage of development, during the winter and early spring of 1942, the average band increased enormously. It was natural that the bands which were led by the most successful, capable, and forceful officers, or by officers who had been given special authority by the Soviet regime, tended to expand most rapidly. In some cases—especially after the spring of 1942—such units sprang from insignificance into formations of 1,000 or more men within a few weeks. In such cases, the new, enormously expanded otryad was soon redesignated a "brigade" and was divided into a number of subordinate otryads. Like the brigades described below, which developed in a more complicated manner, usually one of these otryads was considerably larger than the others and more closely associated with the brigade commander. Some partisan commanders not only increased the size of their own otryads, however, but frequently brought other otryads under their leadership. The resulting new formation was designated in various ways. In its early stage, it was frequently called a *soyedineniye,* i.e., a "unification" or "complex," but for the sake of convenience it may be referred to here as a brigade. The brigade did not always act as a unit. Many operations continued to be carried out by individual otryads which received only general direction from the brigade commander. On the other hand, in defense against German attacks, except in hopeless situations when the band broke up into very small groups and sought safety in unorganized flight, its parts tended to operate together. It also generally operated as a unit in carrying out attacks on railroads. Some of these attacks required only a few men for the actual demolition, although sizable forces were needed to hold off the German forces guarding the road. A more important reason for maintaining bands of considerable size was to have enough men available under one command for rotating groups to carry out sustained attacks on considerable sections of a railroad. Such operations became increasingly important as time went on.

By late summer 1942 there were very few areas in which bands of less than 350 men predominated. A few such bands, for the most part engaged in carrying out specialized tasks, were generally present in most areas. Other bands in the process of being formed or after being mauled by German forces frequently fell below 350 men, although the depleted brigade usually regained at least this number after a short time. If it failed to reach its old strength, it usually disappeared or joined a larger unit.

On the other hand, very few bands exceeded 2,000 men for any length of time. The upper limit occurred partly because, in the summer of 1942 when most bands had reached the level of 350-2,000 men, heavy German attacks against the partisans caused the over-all strength to stabilize, and as a result it became increasingly difficult for individual bands to expand. About the same time the institution of higher control centers for the partisan movement on the German side of the lines tended to freeze the bands at the size already reached.

In a unit much above 2,000 men it would have been impossible for the commander and his associates to be personally familiar with the capacities of each subunit, and to be well acquainted

with each of their subordinate officers. Such personal knowledge and contact were essential to the flexibility of command necessary under partisan warfare conditions, and were especially important because the rudimentary military training of the partisans ill prepared them for carrying out elaborate, long-range directives. Personal contact was also of great value in maintaining morale and discipline. The Soviet regime was protected against the potential danger of insurrection arising from overly strong allegiance to a band leader because no single band was strong enough to carry out a dangerous revolt. At the same time, a group of over 350 men was likely to contain sufficiently heterogeneous elements for the development of a cliquish spirit of passive resistance to Soviet orders to be met by opposition, or at least to be reported to higher authorities.

A most important reason for limiting the number of bands, and thus keeping the individual bands fairly large, was the scarcity of capable commanders and commissars. It was possible to find such leaders for several hundred brigades averaging 800 men each, but it would have been difficult to locate enough to lead thousands of bands averaging 100 men each. From the prestige viewpoint, too, the larger band was more effective. Whether it was more efficient operationally is much more difficult to decide. As we have noted above, some operations required groups of brigade size, but these were comparatively rare. Defensively, the additional strength was useful, although it was probably more difficut for individual partisans to escape from a defeat which involved an entire brigade than to melt away from an encounter involving only a few score men. In general, the principal advantage of the brigade level of 350-2,000 men seems to have been the fact that it represented the maximum number of partisans who could be controlled effectively by one command.

Not only was the size of the bands important, but also their mobility. At first most of them operated within very small areas. This was of course especially true of the territorial otryad, which had been formed in a single rayon and was intended to operate close to it, but it was also true to a limited extent of many of the bands composed of ex-Red Army men, who for months stayed in a limited region. It has already been noted that the limitation of the partisan band to a small area was evidently a major feature of the original plan of partisan organization. Within the framework of that plan, it was not illogical. However, when the territorial system as a whole disintegrated in the greater part of the occupied section, it was no longer desirable for the few remaining territorial otryads and the new otryads being formed on other bases to remain within their original area. In many regions it was impossible, since open terrain could be combed by the German security forces without great difficulty. Even when a band was able to maintain itself in one locality, however, this soon proved undesirable. The Communist leadership evidently thought that the familiarity of the territorial partisans with their areas would be a great advantage; in practice even some of the specially selected Party and NKVD men in these groups were inclined to maintain themselves in comfortable and relatively permanent hide-outs without attracting German attention. Many leaders of the partisan movement thus found that it was desirable to keep their bands moving about frequently, though often within a small district, in order to avoid vegetation through inactivity. A second factor was equally important in persuading the officers to transfer the bands out of their home areas. While the Party and NKVD officers often had no strong personal attachments in the areas where they had served, the rank-and-file members frequently had families there who would suffer at the hands of the Germans, either as special victims of retaliation or as objects of the general repressive measures carried out by the Germans in areas where partisans operated. Consequently, most partisan bands were moved to regions at least a number of miles from their point of origin.

As the partisan band increased in numbers and moved from its territorial base, its organization tended to become more military. The individual otryads were subdivided into platoons of roughly equal strength. More important, a regular headquarters detachment was set up, including

intelligence, "OO" (NKVD), and quartermaster sections. Many otryads had had "chiefs of staff" from the beginning, but in the brigade this post was much more important. Frequently the brigade chief of staff was a regular Red Army officer, who had joined the partisans after being cut off from the Soviet force, or had been sent in from Soviet-held territory to assume the function of military specialist. In addition to planning military operations, the chief of staff evidently often had considerable influence on the organization of the band, which he tended to mold along army lines. As will be described below, these changes were closely connected with the establishment within the occupied territory of a permanent higher echelon of command over the partisan bands in various regions.

While these changes, which began as early as the spring, but became general only in the summer or autumn of 1942 after the bands had reached their full strength, tended to transform the partisan unit into something resembling a regular military formation, there were many extremely important ways in which the bands' irregular origin and development revealed themselves. The brigades differed widely in size, equipment, and internal organization, as did their component units, the otryads. While a headquarters detachment and a regular staff were established, the commander continued in many cases to direct not only the brigade as such, but also the otryad within it which had originated as his personal band. Moreover, this otryad was usually far larger than any other in the brigade (frequently as large as all the others put together), and often possessed better equipment. It is obvious that this superiority arose from the intimate connection of the commander and the commissar with the larger otryad, and, conversely, that its allegiance to them as individuals tended to strengthen their position within the brigade as a whole.

The highly generalized plan of organization of a partisan band at the end of 1942 [Fig. 1] may illustrate some of the factors described above, though it is essential to recognize that no such standardized pattern was ever developed for any large proportion of partisan units.

C. THE CENTRAL STAFF

The rapid growth and increasing activity of the partisan bands during the winter of 1941-42 not only led to a reorganization of the individual band, but to a far-reaching transformation of the superior command structure. On 30 May 1942 a central agency for the over-all direction of the partisan bands was created in Moscow in the form of the "Central Staff of the Partisan Movement."

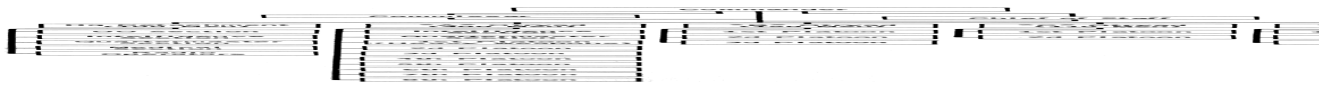

***Figure 1.*—Generalized structure of the partisan brigade.**

[Vershigora, p. 390; Fyodorov, p. 436.]

Shortly afterwards, similar staffs were set up on the union republic or Army Front level to serve as focal points of Soviet control over the bands in a large area of operations. [For a discussion of the union republic and Front Staffs, see below, Sect. Ill, D.] Before proceeding to an examination of the functions and organization of these staffs it is necessary to discuss briefly the agencies which had directed the partisans during the winter of 1941-42, and the problems of control which prompted the introduction of an entirely new top command structure.

By the beginning of 1942 the framework of control by territorial Party organizations had disintegrated, and the influence of the Red Army had increased greatly. As noted above, the various Red Army commands took over a large proportion of the territorially formed partisan

otryads. At the same time, the teams of parachutists, while frequently led by men recruited by the Party, had been turned over to the Red Army for assignment and operational employment as partisan organizers. The influence of the leaders of such teams arose in considerable measure from their newly acquired status as Red Army officers. Moreover, the increasing numbers of isolated Red Army officers who assumed command positions in the bands tended to identify themselves with the Red Army in the partisan movement. Even among bands which had no special reason to be bound to the Red Army, strong factors induced a feeling of dependence. The Party and the NKVD lost rapidly in prestige during the final months of 1941 as a result of the precipitate retreat and confused evacuation, which indicated lack of preparation and in many cases poor morale in the political branches of the regime. Whatever share the Red Army had in this loss of status was regained by its impressive victories during the winter months. Moreover, there was an important practical factor which induced the partisan band, whatever its origin, to seek attachment to the Red Army. Especially after the German advance came to a halt, the Red Army sent out long-range scouting teams composed of regular military personnel and usually including radio operators. Encounters with these teams were often the first contact the bands were able to establish with the Soviet side of the front. Not only was such contact important for information and morale, but it frequently led to material assistance from the various Red Army commands, primarily through the air force units which they had at their disposal. [For a detailed discussion of air support to partisans, see Chap. VI, Sect. I.]

The combination of factors described above gave the Red Army considerable influence on the partisan bands operating in early 1942. In addition, military control was exercised more formally. The Red Army commands at various levels—Fronts, armies, corps, and divisions—issued orders directly to the partisans. When a partisan band was able to maintain contact by air, radio, or courier with an army unit, it depended on the army unit for information on the tactical situation as well as for supplies, and in return it was required to execute tasks which the army outfit thought desirable. Since such contact was difficult to maintain, and the number of tasks of military value which a partisan band could perform at this time was limited, the control exercised was in the great majority of cases irregular and sporadic. For bands operating in close proximity to an irregular front across which communication could take place relatively easily, control was of some importance; for distant bands, even those created by Red Army emissaries, control was practically ineffective, or at best extremely difficult. For example, in the late spring of 1942, G. Linkov, one of the major parachutist officers, was cautioned against moving his headquarters to western Belorussia, as distance would then make radio communication impossible with higher headquarters on the Soviet side of the front.

[Linkov, pp. 257 ff.]

The German reports and postwar Soviet memoirs provide only scant information on the institutional mechanism used for controlling the partisans during this period of late 1941 and 1942. Apparently the arrangements were of an *ad hoc* nature. The political administrations at various levels of the Red Army command structure continued to exercise some measure of control, but the partisan movement apparently became too large and too complex to be supervised by these organs. The NKVD "OO" sections in the Red Army commands also played an important part, but it was apparently primarily an indirect one. A major role, at least in formulating the most important decisions, appears to have been played by the military councils, especially at the Front level. The importance assumed by these organs arose in part, it appears, from the fact that, as bodies which included representatives of the political as well as the strictly military sections of the Red Army, they assembled leaders interested in many facets of partisan activity. Very significant in this connection was the fact that the military soviets of the Fronts included several top Party officials who had played leading roles in territories in which the partisans were now operating. For example, A. A. Zhdanov, the first secretary of the important

Leningrad *obkom,* was a member of the military council of the Northwest Front, and of the Volkhov and Leningrad Fronts, when these were formed; Khrushchev, first secretary of the Ukrainian Party, was a member of the military council of the South Front, and later of the Voronezh Front; Peter A. Kalinin, a secretary of the Belorussian Party, was a member of the military council of the West Front. Little is known concerning the activities of these Party leaders at the Fronts, but that their membership in the military councils was not merely formal is suggested by the fact that for a considerable time they were physically present at the Front headquarters.

Since very little information on the actual operation of the control structure is available for the period under discussion, it is difficult to explain why it was superseded after a few months. A few hypotheses may be advanced, however. We have just noted that the arrangements for control by various Red Army organizations were of an *ad hoc,* makeshift nature. Possibly no element of the Red Army was fully prepared to handle all the complex problems arising in the large-scale partisan movement which was developing during the later winter of 1941-42. Quite possibly—though there is virtually no evidence on this point—friction arose between the ordinary military staffs, the political administrations, and the "OO" sections. It is likely that an increasing number of questions had to be referred to the military councils, which included high representatives of these groups, but which were scarcely able to devote a major share of their time to the partisan movement. As a result, it probably became increasingly obvious that a new institutional framework was needed—one which would combine the various viewpoints essential in dealing with the partisan movement, contain a number of specialists who could devote full time to supervising the partisans, and at the same time continue to bring together Party and Army officials of sufficient stature to make major decisions. The creation of such a new institution was, moreover, a standard Soviet practice when the system was confronted with a new set of problems.

Aside from the purely functional considerations just outlined, there were probably political motivations as well, although these are even more difficult to demonstrate in the absence of direct evidence. As will be indicated below, one motive behind creating and publicizing the distinct partisan command structure was to give the impression that the partisan movement was a more widespread force than was actually the case. A second political motive is harder to establish. It seems probable, however, that many of the top Soviet authorities, especially in the Party, were becoming somewhat alarmed at the Red Army's rapid increase in power and influence after its impressive winter victories. Very likely they feared concentrating too much of the war effort in the hands of the Red Army command, and were apprehensive about the increased Red Army prestige resulting from successes against the enemy. The separation of the partisan movement from the Red Army by creating a distinct command structure served in some degree to remove this increasingly important element from the army command, and to establish another center which shared the prestige obtained by armed attack on the invader.

Though the Soviet regime may have intended to lessen Red Army influence by establishing the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement, no open break with the previous system of control through the Red Army was made. The Central Staff was formally attached to Army supreme headquarters; Marshal Klimentii Voroshilov was appointed commander in chief of the partisan movement. At the same time, however, Panteleimon Ponomarenko, first secretary of the Belorussian Party, who for some time had been one of the inner circle of the regime, was appointed Chief of Staff of the partisan movement.

[Tsanava II, 30; Vershigora, pp. 74, 396.]

Ponomarenko was in fact the real director of the Central Staff: its orders were issued over his signature, he appointed and removed major partisan officers, and the partisan leaders apparently regarded him as their direct superior.

[This is best brought out in the account of the big meeting of partisan commanders in Moscow in August 1942, which is given in Soviet postwar memoirs. (Vershigora, p. 42; Tsanava II, 30; Linkov, p. 518.)]

[For the text of an operational order issued over Ponomarenko's signature, see Appendix, Document 8.] The renewed influence of the Party was enhanced by attaching the Central Staff to the Central Committee of the Ail-Union Communist Party, although this link was not so frequently stressed in orders and propaganda pronouncements as was the attachment to Army supreme headquarters.

Little is known about the internal organization of the Central Staff. Apparently it was always physically located in Moscow, in close contact with the highest authorities.

[According to some reports the deputy chief of staff of the Central Staff was one Sergiyenko, who, it is said, had been People's Commissar of the Interior of the Ukrainian SSR, and after the outbreak of the war L. P. Beria's deputy. (Alexander Ruzanov, "Pravda o partizanskom dvizhenii," *Frontovoi Listok,* 28, 30 October 1943.) Actually, the Ukrainian Commissar of the Interior had been I. A. Serov. It is hard to see how Ruzanov, who had been a special aide of T. A. Strokach, chief of staff of the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement [see Appendix, Document 6], could have confused the name of so well-known an official as Serov. The article cited above is based on Ruzanov's interrogation, after his capture, by a German officer. In the article Ruzanov also states that he worked for A. S. Shcherbakov in the Central Staff, but there is no confirmation of Shcherbakov's being in that organization. A much later German document confirms Sergiyenko's being a high figure in the Central Staff, however, even stating that in 1944 he succeeded P. K. Ponomarenko as Chief of Staff. Possibly Sergiyenko—whoever he really was—headed a more secret agency for central control of the partisans after the Central Staff was officially abolished on 13 January 1944.]

Undoubtedly the Central Staff had considerable personnel at its direct disposal, and a complex organization. One German report, which is possibly overdetailed in view of the available evidence, lists the following eleven sections of the Staff:

1. Operations

2. Intelligence

3. Communications

4. Personnel

5. Administration and Quartermaster

6. OO

7. Code

8. Cartographical

9. Finance

10. Transport

11. Propaganda and Press

[OKH/GenStdH/FHO, Nachrichten ueber den Bandenkrieg, Nr. 3, 28 July 1943, Anlage 10 (GMDS, H 3/738).]

D. THE FRONT STAFFS

Although from the spring of 1942 on, when the Central Staff was the central coordinating command of the partisan movement in close contact with the highest Army and Party authorities, the principal operational control of most of the partisans continued to be exercised from command centers distant from the capital, the circumstances under which the partisan movement was developing led to an important division in the control of bands in different parts of the occupied area. As was previously described, the territorial partisan organization, where it was effective at all, tended to come under the control of the Army field commands in areas near the front lines. The greatly increased partisan activity during the early months of 1942 also took place, for the most part, in areas near the fronts, although there was a growing tendency to reinforce or revive the partisan movement in more distant areas through the use of parachute teams. It was with the areas near the front that the military councils and the other organs of the Red Army had naturally been most concerned, and it was in these areas that arrangements for control of the partisan movement were most advanced when the Central Staff was formed, although even there the control system was makeshift.

Within a period of four or five months after the formation of the Central Staff, Front Staffs of the Partisan Movement (referred to hereafter as "Front Staffs") were formed at most of the Red Army Front headquarters. Basically, these new organizations appear to have been developed from the military council control system. Like the Front military council, the Front Staff contained representatives of the major Soviet agencies concerned with the conduct of the war in the area of the Front concerned. Unlike the members of the Front military council, however, these representatives as a rule were permanently assigned to the task of directing the partisan movement. While the members of the military council were confronted with multitudinous duties, both military and political, the Front Staff members were or became specialists in partisan warfare. At the same time, they were persons of lower rank than the military council members. While the chief political official at a Front military council was usually a Politburo member who was a regional first secretary, such as Khrushchev or Zhdanov, the corresponding position in the Front Staff was as a rule held by a second or third secretary or a first secretary of a smaller territorial division. From one point of view, the Front Staff acted as a technical committee of the military soviet; in some documents the Front Staff is referred to as being "at the Military Council of the Front." Undoubtedly the Front Staff received orders from the military council, and probably major policy questions were referred to the latter body. At the same time, however, the Front Staff received military operational orders directly from the Red Army Front commander, or from the appropriate sections of his headquarters, such as the intelligence section. [For an example of an order of Front headquarters intelligence section to the Front Partisan Staff, see Appendix, Document 15.]

The preceding paragraph indicates the strong ties of the Front Staff to the Front headquarters. However, the Front Staff was not a mere tool of the previously existing structure for control of the partisan movement by the Front command. It was also both formally and actually a subordinate command of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement and an integral part of the

newly formed system of partisan control. While, because of scarcity of evidence, it is difficult to assess the degree of subordination of the Front Staff to the Central Staff as compared with the Front headquarters, apparently major directives on a wide variety of topics were given to the Front Staff by the Central Staff. Moreover, one member of each Front Staff was formally designated a representative of the Central Staff; in one case, apparently, this member was also the Chief of the Front Staff.

[S. S. Belchenko, who became People's Commissar of the Interior of Belorussia after the war, was chief of the Kalinin Front Staff; in some cases, apparently, a territorial staff also had a representative at a Front Staff.]

The *de facto* control of the Central Staff over the Front Staff was enhanced by the fact that it conducted training courses for partisan officers under Front Staff jurisdiction, and probably it also appointed and removed the more important partisan officers.

[Little exact information on this subject is available. It seems likely that the Central Staff did not itself appoint members of the Front Staff. These very important officers were probably selected by the Party directly, or by the Party, Red Army, Central Staff, and possibly the NKVD acting together. On the other hand, the Central Staff probably played a major role in selecting the principal officers of headquarters under the Front Staff, such as the operative center in the rear of the enemy, as well as the commanders and commissars of some of the more important bands. E.g., Yemlyutin and other partisan commanders in the Bryansk area were either appointed or confirmed by the Central Staff at the Moscow meeting in August 1942. (Vershi-gora, p. 42.) For an example of training courses directed by the Central Staff, see Appendix, Document 9.]

The Front Staff was provided with a fairly large technical staff, including sections for radio and cryptography, administration and intelligence. In some cases special squadrons of planes were placed at its disposal for communication with the partisans under its command, and the Front Staff frequently kept at its headquarters special groups of partisans or scouts who were used only on temporary missions in the occupied areas. In addition, there were liaison and inspection officers detailed to maintain contact with and control over the partisan bands.

By early 1943 staffs of the partisan movement were apparently established at most Red Army Front commands. Since the sections controlled by each front remained fairly stable from early 1942 until late 1943, a brief discussion of these areas and the peculiarities of the development and organization of the Front Staff in each area may be worthwhile. At the extreme northern end of the line was the Karelian Front, which included the long section from Lake Onega to the Barents Sea. Although there was a well-organized partisan staff at this front, its activities are of restricted importance, and little is known of its origin. Farther south, Leningrad Oblast was divided among three fronts, the Leningrad Front, the Volkhov Front, and the Northwest Front. Each had its partisan command center, but, unlike those at other Fronts, they were not semi-independent headquarters, subject only to the Front Command and the Central Staff, but were dependent upon an intermediate command. This command, the Leningrad Staff of the Partisan Movement, was located in the city of Leningrad, and was directed by M. N. Nikitin, a secretary of the Leningrad *obkom* and, therefore, a lieutenant of one of the major Soviet leaders, Zhdanov. Nikitin directed the Leningrad Staff personally, issuing major operational orders and instructions concerning personnel to partisans throughout the oblast, either directly or through subordinate partisan commands with the Northwest Front and Volkhov Fronts. These partisan commands were called "operative groups."

[P. Sheverdalkin, ed., *Listovki partizanskoi voiny* v *Leningradskoi oblasti, 1941-1944* (Leningrad: Leningradskoi Gazetno-Zhurnalnoye i Knizhnoye Izdatelstvo, 1945), pp. 3, 7.]

Apparently this arrangement, which was unique in the partisan movement, arose from the fact that the territory of Leningrad Oblast had originally been included entirely in the zone of a single Front, the Northwest Front. It appears that the Leningrad Oblast Party apparatus, which was very active in the formation of partisan groups, controlled the whole area, in conjunction with the Front command in 1941. When the Northwest Front was divided, it was evidently felt most desirable to retain this unity of control; possibly Zhdanov's great influence played a part in maintaining a more centralized partisan command structure in his oblast.

South of Leningrad Oblast, the Kalinin Front, after the winter battles of 1941-42, stretched across almost the entire width of Kalinin Oblast and the northern half of Smolensk Oblast, as well as extending to Vitebsk Oblast, in Belorussia. In this case the unity of military command prevailed over the unity of the administrative territories, and all three oblasts were assigned to Kalinin Front Staff. The same arrangement existed at the next front to the south, where the West Front staff controlled the partisans in the southern half of Smolensk Oblast and the northern and western parts of Orel Oblast. [See Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B, 2.]

The southern half of Orel Oblast (or more properly, the southwestern corner, since the greater part was under the West Front) for many months formed an exception to the general scheme of organization by Fronts. Instead of being subject to the Bryansk Front, which was the closest military command, it was placed under a partisan command based on the administrative territorial division, and was known as the Orel Staff of the Partisan Movement. This staff apparently continued to exist until early 1943. Based at Yelets, the seat of the Front Command, it operated in close conjunction with it. In 1943 it was replaced, apparently without great changes of organization, by the Bryansk Front Staff of the Partisan Movement, and later by the Central Front Staff, when the Central Front took over the area of Bryansk Front. [See Chap. VIII, Sect. I, B and Sect. II, A and B.]

The great stretch of open steppe to the south was divided among several fronts, the designations of which changed from time to time during the period under discussion. Some of the control relationships of the partisan movement in this area have been described above. In certain areas, and at certain times, the Front military commands (which apparently had special operating groups of the territorial staffs attached to them) here exercised control over partisans close enough to the front line to make such arrangements practicable, but for the most part the number of partisans was not sufficient to make a regular institutional control system necessary, and apparently no "Front Staffs" were formally established.

[None was established by October 1942, at least at the Voronezh Front, where the military council continued to direct the few partisan detachments.]

Below the Front Staff, when it happened that individual Soviet armies were in close contact with partisan bands on the German side of the lines, "operative groups" were set up at the army headquarters to coordinate the partisans' operations with the activities of the Army.

[The term "operative group" was used by the Soviet partisans to designate several types of intermediate commands. The operative group with the army headquarters is not to be confused with the operative group in the rear of the enemy described elsewhere.]

Organizationally these groups were miniature Front Staffs, including in some cases even Party officials from the territorial administrative division covered by the army command. The rank of the partisan operative group commanders, was, however, lower than it was for the Front Staffs, and the technical apparatus was smaller and less complex. Apparently there was no effort to establish operative groups at each army command; instead they were organized only in those

areas where they were especially needed. The operative group played an important role in directing the activities of the partisans, and sometimes arranged for their supply, but did not as a rule concern itself with major political activities, or appoint and remove command personnel.

The discussion on the foregoing pages can be made a little clearer by examining one Front Staff and its subordinate commands. Perhaps the most complicated of all the Front Staff organizations was the Kalinin Front Staff, since it included sections of two separate oblasts of the RSFSR, as well as an oblast of the Belorussian SSR. The staff was physically located near Toropets, in Kalinin Oblast. It was headed by Colonel S. S. Bel-chenko, described as a secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belorussia, and after the war People's Commissar of the Interior of Belorussia. It is fairly clear that, as Chief of the Kalinin Front Staff, he also was formally given the posts of member of the military council of that front, and representative of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement. It is also very probable that his staff included a delegation, or advance section, of the Staff of the Belorussian Partisan Movement (see below). Staff sections included the following: operations, intelligence, communications, personnel, general, quartermaster, records, and code. Twenty-five aircraft were assigned to the staff.

The partisan bands in the area under the Kalinin Front Staff were directly controlled from three headquarters. A number of the bands were immediately subject to the directions of the Front Staff. Others were controlled by two operative groups subordinate to the Kalinin Front Staff. One of these operative groups was located at the headquarters of the Third Assault Army, and was under the command of Senior Battalion Commissar Sokolov. Most of its bands operated in Kalinin Oblast, but there was no apparent connection between the administration or Party organization in this territorial division and the operative group. The second operative group, with the Fourth Assault Army, however, controlled most of the Vitebsk Oblast partisans, and was apparently closely associated with the Vitebsk Party *obkom.* As will be described a little later, both the Front Staff and its subordinate operative groups issued orders in some cases directly to individual bands, and in others passed them on through partisan operative groups in the occupied areas.

E. THE TERRITORIAL STAFFS

The control exercised by the Central Staff over the Fronts Staffs was real, especially in matters concerning appointment and dismissal of personnel and in the conduct of operations of a broad political or strategical nature. Conditions of military operations in the areas close to the front demanded that a dual responsibility be set for the Front Staffs, however, and in practice many of their operational orders emanated from the military front commands. The introduction of the partisan staff system at the Front level seems chiefly to have served the purpose of institutionalizing joint control of Party and Army authorities over the partisans near the fronts, and of enhancing the prestige of the Party and of the partisan movement as such.

The relationship of the Central Staff to the territorial partisan staffs was much more intimate. Apparently the Staff of the Partisan Movement of the South was not very significant; except in the Crimea, where direct Army control was most important, it had only a few scattered bands under its administration.

[In addition to the Staff of the Partisan Movement of the South, and the staffs of the two major union republics (Ukrainian and Belorussian), eventually territorial staffs were set up in most of the other occupied union republics. There was a Latvian Staff which operated a number of bands composed in part of Latvians, in part of Russians; the relative unimportance of this staff is indicated by the fact that even in 1944 it had

only three small brigades; the Lithuanian Staff also controlled a considerable number of partisans. A Moldavian Staff was set up originally as a subsection of the Ukrainian Staff, but in February 1944 it was made at least nominally independent, at a time when bands from outside first reached the territory of the Moldavian Republic. On the other hand, while there is some evidence that an Estonian Staff existed, it never played an important role. Apparently partisans in the Karelo-Finnish SSR were under control of the Karelian Front Staff.]

The Belorussian Staff of the Partisan Movement (formed 9 September 1942) played a greater role. Earlier in this section it was noted that the parachutist organizing teams were relatively most important in the southern, central, and western Belorussian areas, i.e., in those parts of the republic most distant from the front. As these teams progressed in their organization of the partisan bands, the territorial Party organization was also able to regain much of its strength. By early 1943 Party oblast committees had been reintroduced or revived in all or most of the Belorussian oblasts, and they played a major part in aiding the partisans and in strengthening resistance to the Germans. About the same time oblast partisan staffs were set up. It is impossible from the meager information available to delineate with any exactitude the lines of responsibility exercised by these two types of centers, but it appears that the Party committees played a considerably greater role in selecting partisan personnel, controlling the civilian population, and perhaps even in selecting operational objectives than they did elsewhere.

[*Obkoms* were frequently located with the operative groups on the German side of the front. Apparently they received orders from the Belorussian Staff in Moscow. (Wi/ID 2.375)]

One might assume that the revival of the Party organization as a major element of the partisan movement would have been hindered by the presence of the parachutist teams, which had received their early training and instruction from the Red Army. As noted earlier, however, most of the team members, or at least their officers, were especially selected by the Party organizations. Some had been chosen by non-Belorussian Party groups, especially the Moscow city apparatus, and there is evidence that a certain amount of friction arose between these "foreigners" and the native party organizations.

[Linkov, pp. 378, 392-93.]

The solution seems to have been, in some cases at least, to use the "Muscovite" parachutists as shock forces, sending them farther to the west and south where conditions were more difficult and the local organization more disrupted, while turning over command of the partisans to local staffs in oblasts like Minsk and Bobruisk.

[*Ibid.,* pp. 305, 324, 374.]

In this connection, it is also important to note that certainly not all the parachutists were non-Belorussians; many, perhaps a majority, of those sent in early in 1942 were men who had fled from Belorussia before the German advance. Frequently they included Party officials who were being sent back to reconstitute the Party organizations in the areas from which they had escaped. These men formed an important section of the territorial partisan staffs which developed later in the year.

The Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement was first formed as the Ukrainian Partisan Staff in the military council of the Southwest Direction (a major military command). Apparently this staff was first formed in Voroshilovgrad, although shortly afterwards it was forced to retreat along with the Red Army to Stalingrad. Since Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Ukrainian Party, was in both these cities because of his duties with the Red Army, it seems likely that

postwar Soviet claims that he played a major role in directing the Ukrainian partisan movement are correct, at least for this early period. It is also clear, however, that Khrushchev exercised only general supervision over the Ukrainian Staff; the post of Chief of the Ukrainian Staff was given to Timofei Strokach, who was deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs for the Ukraine. Moreover, on 29 June 1942 the Ukrainian Staff was detached from the military command (the Southwest Direction having been dissolved). Sometime in the middle of 1942 Strokach and the Staff were moved to Moscow. Khrushchev was also in Moscow for a time, apparently engaging in some of the high-level planning for the partisan movement, but he later returned to the armies in the south. Nevertheless, Soviet accounts give Khrushchev major credit for Ukrainian partisan operations.

[The account given in this paragraph was originally based primarily on German sources; the Soviet version is in the official Soviet war history: Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza,* ed. P. N. Pos-pelov *et al.* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR), II (1961), 476-78. In general, the Soviet version (from which most of the dates of staff formations and dissolutions are taken) confirms our earlier reconstructions.]

At the time of its organization, the Ukrainian Staff, unlike the Belo-russian and the Front Staffs, had no major partisan bands under its control. As has already been noted, the original territorial partisan organization west of the Dnepr had scarcely begun before the German occupation, while, except in the extreme northern area, those bands which began operating east of the Dnepr were wiped out either before or during the winter of 1941-42. The exceptions were the Chernigov Oblast otryads, which during the winter were gradually brought together under the command of the *obkom* secretary, Fyodorov, and a number of rayon otryads in adjoining Sumy Oblast. Strong German antipartisan drives in the winter of 1941-42 compelled even these bands to retreat to the deeper forests of Orel Oblast in the RSFSR. Consequently, except for brief raids, the Ukraine was practically devoid of partisans during the spring and summer of 1942.

In spite of, or more correctly, because of the situation just described, the higher Soviet authorities seem to have devoted more attention to the Ukrainian Staff than to any other level of partisan command below the Central Staff itself. When the Central Staff was dissolved on 13 January 1944, the overt role of the Ukrainian Staff increased still more. Undoubtedly the major reason for this emphasis was the importance of the Ukraine among the occupied territories. It contained one-half of the Soviet population under German rule and far more than one-half of the economic resources of the occupied regions. Moreover, the people of the East Ukraine had suffered especially from collectivization, and might have been expected to be more susceptible to anti-Soviet propaganda. The presence of large collaborationist elements and a vigorous, though small group of anti-Soviet nationalists, reinforced by nationalist propagandists from the Western Ukraine, increased this danger. If a strong Soviet partisan movement could have been developed in the Ukraine it would have hindered German exploitation of the region's material and human resources, and at the same time would have weakened and terrorized anti-Soviet elements.

Some indication of the importance attached to the Ukrainian Staff is furnished by an examination of its internal structure with attention to the relatively high positions of the officials assigned to it. [See Fig. 2.] In addition to the highly organized staff in Moscow, a special forward command section (at first in Starobelsk, later in Voroshilovgrad) under the command of a Colonel Metyelev was established, with a complex organization largely duplicating that of the parent staff. Moreover, thirty-eight of the scarce Douglas airplanes were assigned for the use of the Ukrainian Staff. [See Chap. VI, Sect. IV.] Perhaps more important as an indication of the influence of the Ukrainian Staff during 1942 and early 1943 is the number of articles, poems,

and books which have been published concerning the Ukrainian partisans, several of them signed by Strokach himself (although without indication of his positions as NKVD officer and chief of staff of the Ukrainian partisan movement).

[See for example, *Komunist,* 24 December 1943, p. 3; and Strokach's book, *Partyzany Ukraïny* (Moscow: Ukrvydav TsKP(b)V, 1943).]

As we have seen, the task of the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement, unlike that of the other major partisan staffs, was not to control and coordinate existing partisan formations, but to create a new partisan movement. Three fairly distinct methods were employed. The earliest is not clearly connected with the Ukrainian Staff as such, and may well have developed independently. It consisted of using parachutist teams to penetrate the Ukraine west of the Dnepr and to attempt the formation of partisan centers which would gradually develop into nuclei for major bands. Evidently a considerable effort was expended; in the spring of 1942 experienced partisan leaders from the Bryansk area were selected for this task and were assigned a large number of specially trained Spanish officers who had lived as refugees in the USSR since the Spanish Civil War. Nevertheless, when these teams were sent in late in the spring of 1942, they were unable to maintain a foothold in the Ukraine itself, but were forced to establish their headquarters in Mozyr Oblast in Belorussia. Only gradually were they able to extend their activities to the extreme north of the Ukraine during the following summer and autumn. Somewhat later, "Muscovite" parachutist organizers moving south from the western oblasts of Belorussia were able to extend their activities to the extreme northwestern corner of the Ukrainian SSR.

***Figure 2.*—Staff of the partisan movement of the Ukraine.**

A second type of operation was probably conducted under the direction of the Ukrainian Staff although direct evidence is lacking. It consisted of frequent incursions by small partisan groups (of 100 men or less) into areas of the southeast Ukraine in the vicinity of the Red Army lines. Since several of these groups are known to have been formed in Voroshilovgrad at a time when Strokach, as head of an NKVD school, was active there and Khrushchev was in the vicinity with the South Front military council, it seems likely that the directors of the Ukrainian partisan headquarters at least assisted in the formation of these bands. Their principal field of activity was the industrial region of the Donbas; here the groups as a rule were very small and were designed for espionage and contact with underground networks, rather than for the usual type of partisan warfare. However, one group, concerning which somewhat more detailed information is available, was a more ordinary type of partisan unit. It was formed in Voroshilovgrad in April 1942, under officers who were experienced partisan leaders. In late May with a strength of 100 men it crossed the front lines about forty miles south of Kharkov, then pursued a northwesterly march route across the extreme western part of Kharkov Oblast. Its tasks, revealed by several captured members to German interrogators, were: "Terrorization of the population which was willing to work [for the Germans], especially the Ukrainian auxiliary police and the newly appointed mayors; disturbance of German troops; destruction of railroads and important military objectives; liberation of prisoners of war; and assembling of scattered partisans and parachutists."

[Korueck 585, Abt Ia, "Bericht ueber die Bekaempfung einer Partisanengruppe vom 1.-18.6.42" (GMDS, Korueck 24430/4).]

What the band was supposed to do after it had carried out these sweeping assignments is unclear; some interrogations suggest that it was to remain in the wooded areas northeast of Poltava; others state that it was to turn northeast and regain the Soviet lines in Kursk Oblast; still others suggest vaguely that the band try to reach the main partisan areas in Bryansk and Smolensk. As it turned out, the group was unable either to accomplish any significant number of its assigned tasks or to find a safe refuge, for, after having traversed about seventy miles of occupied territory, it was caught and destroyed by German security forces about midway between Kharkov and Poltava.

The efforts described in the two preceding paragraphs were extremely marginal and scarcely affected any sizable proportion of the Ukrainian population. In the meantime, during the summer and autumn of 1942, considerable efforts were being devoted to propaganda designed to create the illusion of a powerful Ukrainian partisan movement before such a force actually existed. Fyodorov, under the pseudonym of "Orlenko," and S. A. Kovpak were built up as popular heroes, and great emphasis was placed on the Ukrainian origin of their bands, although their actual operations during this period barely touched Ukrainian soil. At the same time, however, the Ukrainian Staff was preparing to transform these exaggerated claims into reality. The instrument it employed was the "roving band." Sometime in the early summer of 1942 the Soviet authorities conceived the plan of using the Bryansk forest as a base, or *place d'armes,* for the development and strengthening of partisan groups of Ukrainian origin, which would then sally forth to carry the partisan movement into the hitherto neglected areas of the Ukraine.

The first of the roving bands to be sent to the west was under the command of Kovpak. To his own "complex" was joined the "complex" under Alexander Saburov, a Kiev NKVD official who had formed his group from among isolated Red Army men, but who could claim at least some connection with the Ukraine. The Kovpak-Saburov bands entered the region west of the Dnepr in November 1942. In February 1943 the bands made a brief raid through the northern rayons of Rovno and Zhitomir Oblasts, but for almost the entire winter remained in the Pripet swamps of Belo-russia. In spite of the fact that Kovpak was now under control of the Ukrainian Staff, his own authority temporarily extended to all the partisan groups in the Belorussian areas in which he operated, apparently embracing the entire Pripet Valley. Moreover, the "Moscow" parachutist teams which represented the major organizing force in the extreme southwestern areas of Belorussia were also placed under his control. In effect, therefore, Kovpak represented a special type of command, which superseded local partisan control centers regardless of the administrative division in which he operated.

[Linkov, pp. 378, 384; cf. Kovpak, p. 105; Shyyan, p. 130.]

In the spring Kovpak was able to move south into Rovno and Zhitomir Oblasts proper, although his group had to keep on the move almost constantly. As a representative of the central command of the Ukrainian partisan movement, Kovpak was the supreme partisan authority in the Ukraine west of the Dnepr. The importance which the central authorities, both on the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement and in the Ukrainian Party, attached to their "plenipotentiary" in the northwest Ukraine is indicated by a number of factors.

[Some postwar Soviet memoirs imply that Kovpak and Saburov were under the control of the Central Staff, ignoring or barely mentioning the Ukrainian Staff. On

the other hand, the best contemporary source (the various materials in the German documents based on the interrogation of Ruzanov) makes it clear that these units were under the Ukrainian Staff. As explained elsewhere, the postwar Soviet memoirs are unreliable on such points, because of their authors' desires to enhance the prestige of various elements and personages in

the Soviet system. It is likely, however, that a very close coordination between the Ukrainian Staff and the Central Staff existed in matters concerning the roving bands, which frequently operated in parts of two or more Soviet republics; it is also quite possible that representatives of the Central Staff were present with the Ukrainian roving bands. Recent Soviet memoirs and histories clearly indicate that Kovpak and Saburov were subordinate to the Ukrainian Staff.]

Kovpak was regularly supplied by air, in spite of his considerable distance from Soviet airports and the customary difficulties of Soviet planes in making night flights of over a hundred miles. The same planes which brought his supplies (whose distribution enabled him to influence his subordinate bands) brought major officials to stimulate the morale of the partisans, to check on their activities, and to issue orders. Strokach himself was among the high officers who visited Kovpak's camp at this time. In addition, Korotchenko, third secretary of the Ukrainian Party, stayed for some time, as did Mykola Kuznetsov, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Komsomols. In addition, a representative of the Central Staff or the Ukrainian Staff, a Captain Shevardin, was permanently assigned to Kovpak's staff.

In the wake of Kovpak's band there appeared a number of groups whose spheres of activity were more permanently set by territorial limitations. During the remainder of 1943 these groups established throughout most of the wooded area of the Ukraine a general network of partisan groups which resembled in strength and density the network established a year earlier in the northern areas. One such group was under Begma, the former first secretary of the Rovno *obkom.* Another was Fyodorov's complex. In the winter of 1942-43 the Fyodorov partisans had been able to re-establish themselves throughout the northern part of Chernigov Oblast, and from then on, this section of the Ukraine east of the Dnepr (like the northern section of Sumy Oblast) may be regarded as partisan-infiltrated to about the the same extent as the northern regions. In the spring Fyodorov followed Kovpak *to* the west, and at about the same time was appointed first secretary of the Rovno *obkom.* His complex established its major base of operations in the northern areas of Rovno and Lutsk Oblasts and continued to operate in this area until the Red Army arrived.

By the middle of 1943 the technique of sending in strong, well-organized, and self-contained roving bands had converted the northwestern forest region of the Ukraine from an area almost devoid of partisans into one of the major centers of Soviet partisan activity. Only in the central areas of Rovno and Lutsk Oblasts, where nationalist sympathizers were strong, were the Soviet partisans unable to achieve significant results. The Ukrainian Staff was apparently dissatisfied with these achievements, however, for neither the enormous steppe regions of the Ukraine, most important economically, nor the most disaffected West Ukrainian area, Galicia, was affected by them. As a result, two spectacular operations were conducted by the Kovpak band and another major roving band under M. I. Naumov during the spring and summer of 1943.

Both Kovpak's and Naumov's bands were almost wiped out in carrying out these raids, but the two commanders escaped and immediately began to reconstitute their bands. By the winter of 1943-44, when the Soviet armies advanced west of the Dnepr, these bands together with Fyodorov's, Saburov's, and a number of newly organized bands of similar size (i.e., about 2,000 men) constituted the major striking force of the partisan movement in the northwest Ukraine. Apparently, however, control of these bands was transferred from the Ukrainian Staff to the Red Army (First Ukrainian Front). Under this new direction, their activities were extended even beyond the borders of the post-1939 Soviet Union, several penetrating eastern Poland and Naumov's going as far as Slovakia.

The significance of the Ukrainian Staff of the Partisan Movement lies in the scale of its individual operations and in the fact that it directed a movement which had to be started from

scratch. The use of the large, comparatively tightly organized, highly mobile roving bands was essential to its special purpose. In effect, the bands under its control were built up and organized in the Bryansk "hothouse," then were transplanted to the Ukraine, thus enabling them to flourish on soil which had hitherto produced no lasting growth of partisans. Materially, at least in the early stages, the efforts devoted to this process may have been out of proportion to the results achieved, but for psychological reasons they were essential.

F. THE INTERMEDIATE PARTISAN COMMAND STRUCTURE

As has been indicated, the principal control agencies of the partisan movement for over-all planning of operations, for liaison with the Party, Red Army, and other organs of the Soviet regime, and for general supervision of partisan activties, were the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement and the Front Staffs and territorial staffs directly subordinate to it— in all about ten staffs. The immediate, day-to-day conduct of partisan activities and the control of the lower levels of partisan personnel were concentrated in the hands of the brigades or similar units. It is evident, however, that the small number of high4evel partisan staffs could not effectively direct the operation of perhaps 200 to 300 brigades without using some intermediate command level. In part this intermediate command was provided by the operative groups at the army or division level. Such control agencies were established at only a limited number of Red Army commands, however, and the supervision they exercised over bands in proximity to the front line was confined primarily to military operational questions. In order to coordinate effectively the activities of the brigades, an intermediate command echelon *within* the German-occupied regions was essential.

As a matter of fact, such partisan command centers in the occupied territories were formed even before the creation of the Central Staff and its subordinate staffs. Possibly the first major centers of this sort were set up by the Red Army in the late winter of 1941-42. One major region in which the Red Army took direct command of the partisan movement was the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh district of Smolensk Oblast. This area was the scene of a major Red Army effort to isolate the German troops stalled before Moscow by sending in large units of regular ground and airborne troops. These troops failed to achieve their objectives, however, and as a result were themselves cut off from the main Soviet armies. They were not immediately destroyed by the Germans and for several months maintained a pocket of resistance. In command was Major General Belov, who had been commander of the First Cavalry Corps, and was now put in charge of all units in the pocket. Belov stimulated a number of local partisan groups to develop rapidly into units of considerable size. The resulting partisan forces, which were called "regiments," averaged over 1,000 men and were consequently much stronger than most other partisan bands of this early period. While there were considerable variations in the internal organization of the regiments, apparently as a result of the superimposition of military organization upon groups of very diverse origins, they more closely resembled regular military formations than did other partisan bands, even at a much later period. Each regiment had a staff detachment of considerable size and was divided into a number of battalions ranging from 300 to 800 men each. These in turn were divided into companies, the companies into platoons, and the platoons into squads. At the regimental and battalion levels, at least, the major officers were the commander, the commissar, and the chief of staff; politruks were assigned to the companies. The regiments and the battalions had supply, reconnaissance, and "OO" sections.

Altogether there were about ten partisan regiments in the Yelnya area by April 1942. Apparently by this time Belov and his staff were finding their task of directly controlling the activities of these regiments, in addition, of course, to commanding the regular Red Army units, to be burdensome. As a result, an intermediate command echelon was instituted, and, in accordance with the general tendency of Army commanders to adopt regular military organization and

nomenclature for the partisan movement, was called a "division." There were two divisions, one controlling five regiments, the other three, while one or more regiments remained directly subject to Red Army corps headquarters. Little is known concerning the actual functioning or internal organization of these divisions. One at least was commanded by a regular army colonel from Belov's staff. Apparently they acted in a manner analogous to that of army divisional headquarters, although certainly exercising less continuous supervision over their regiments. [For details of the partisan organization in this area, see Chap. VII, Sect. I, B and C]

The Yelnya type of military command structure was destroyed, along with most of the partisans in the area, late in the spring of 1942. It was not altogether unique in the partisan movement, however. Farther south, although also under the direction of the West Front, the Red Army played an equally active role in organizing and reinforcing the partisan groups, which for a time were in direct contact with the Soviet forces through the large Kirov gap. Here, too, "regiments" were set up, frequently under the command of regular Red Army officers, and similar in size (1,000 to 1,500 men) and internal organization (battalions) to those in the Yelnya area. [See Chap. VIII, Sect. II, A.] It is uncertain, however, whether an intermediate command structure corresponding to the Yelnya "division" was set up, although some German reports for early 1943 state that the brigades in the area were later combined into partisan divisions. In mid-1942, however, when army control was closest, the regiments which formed the basic partisan organization apparently operated directly under command of a nearby Red Army division. [See Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B.]

More typical was the intermediate command structure which developed in the southern part of the Bryansk forest. This center remained one of the most important intermediate commands, and in a general way it was similar to those operating farther north. Some time during the late winter of 1941-42 a group of partisan officers, headed by D. V. Yemlyutin, a high NKVD official of Orel Oblast, and A. D. Bondarenko, a Party secretary of one of the occupied Orel rayons, formed a headquarters in Smelizh, near the edge of Orel Oblast. These leaders probably had some authorization from the Soviet regime, although contact with the Soviet side of the front was intermittent until late spring. Within a few months Yemlyutin (who became commander of the new center, while Bondarenko became commissar) was directing 10,000 partisans, divided into about thirty bands, of which perhaps ten were of brigade size. In August, Yemlyutin, Bondarenko, and the major band commanders were flown to Moscow. After a conference with leading officials of the Party and the partisan movement, Yemlyutin was officially confirmed as director of the partisan center in the forests of southwestern Orel Oblast. His headquarters was designated as the "United Partisan Detachments of the Western Rayons of Orel Oblast," but was usually known as an "operative group."

[Andreyev, p. 316; see also this book, Chap. VIII, Sect. II, A.]

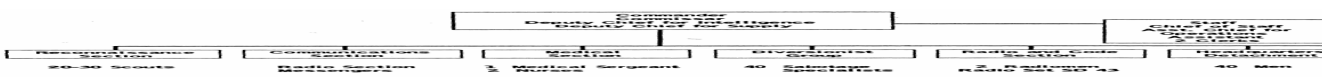

***Figure 3.*—Operative group in the rear of the enemy. *Source:* OKH/GenStdH/FHO, *Nachrichten ueber den Bandenkrieg Nr. 3,* 28 July 1943, Anlage 9 (GMDS, H 3/738), with minor alterations.**

Little is known about the internal organization and activities of the Yemlyutin operative group. [For a German version of the organization of a typical operative group, see Fig. 3.] By 1943 there was a staff of specialists of some size, including in particular a considerable force to service the airfield, which formed the principal base for receiving supplies from the Soviet forces; communications personnel, who maintained regular radio contact with the Soviet

authorities; and generally a partisan force of almost brigade size to provide close-in protection for the headquarters. The operative group, as previously noted, was for a long time under the direction of the Orel Staff of the Partisan Movement and did not come under the direct control of a Front Staff (the Bryansk Front Staff), an arrangement that was customary until early 1943 for partisan forces so close to the front lines. Under ordinary circumstances, the following were apparently the chief duties of Yemlyutin and his staff:

1. Passing on major operational orders to the subordinate bands. In particular these included orders for coordinated attacks on the German railroads, which were of crucial importance in the Bryansk area.

2. Receiving and dispatching to the bands men and supplies, as well as messages and information, which could best be received by the powerful radio station and well-established airfield of the headquarters.

3. Exercising general supervision over the bands, making sure that they were active against the enemy, and guarding against any tendency to thwart the wishes of the regime. It is not certain whether the operative group was authorized to appoint or dismiss band officers.

In addition to these ordinary duties, the operative group appears to have assumed many more operational command functions in times of crisis when major German offensives were under way against the partisans. The southern Bryansk forest formed in effect a huge armed camp, impenetrable by any ordinary German force, from which the partisan bands sallied forth for raids and to which they could normally retire in complete security. However, when a major action against the forest base was under way, most of the bands retreated to prepared defensive positions within a fairly restricted radius. Under these circumstances, it became necessary and feasible for the Yemlyutin operative group to assume active direction of the entire force.

In many respects the Yemlyutin operative group was similar to other intermediate control centers which, unlike the Yelnya and Kirov groups, were not directly formed by the military commands. Such nonmilitary partisan centers were active principally in Belorussia, Kalinin Oblast, and Leningrad Oblast. In Belorussia there was an intermediate command known as an "operative center," which roughly corresponded to an oblast (it is to be remembered that the oblasts in Belorussia were much smaller than those in the Ukraine or the RSFSR). These commands evidently operated in a fashion roughly similar to Yemlyutin's, but differed in two important respects. Most of them—especially those in Minsk and Mogilev Oblasts—appear to have worked in very close conjunction with the underground Party committees, with the personnel of the operative center and the committee frequently overlapping.

[Though Yemlyutin and Bondarenko were officials of Orel Oblast, the fact that they were available to direct the southern Bryansk partisans was partly accidental; in central Belorussia the relationship of Party to partisan was evidently part of an over-all plan.]

The role of the Party in directing these operative centers was doubtless enhanced by the fact that they were directed by the Belorussian Staff, a territorial partisan echelon, while the Orel Staff, although in a sense a territorial organization, worked in close conjunction with a Front command. In addition to its high degree of Party control, the Belorussian intermediate command organization was distinguished by a two-step structure. Between the band and the operative centers were operative groups, which controlled comparatively small areas, one or a few rayons. The operative groups also worked in close conjunction with the Party organizations, in their case the rayon committees. Apparently the high concentration of partisans in Belorussia (in 1943

probably well over half of all the partisans in the occupied USSR, and far more than half in 1944) and the influence of the Party organization were the key factors in the erection of the two-step system.

The intermediate partisan command structure in Kalinin and Smolensk Oblasts does not seem to have been outstandingly different from that in Belorussia. In Leningrad Oblast, on the other hand, a distinguishing characteristic was the confusing use of the term "brigade" to designate the operative group, while individual bands of ordinary brigade size were called "regiments." There were about ten brigades of this type, and no other intermediate command level on the German side of the lines existed. Since each of the three Soviet Fronts in the Leningrad areas corresponded in size to an army, the partisan commands at these Fronts were similar to operative groups at other army headquarters. [See subsection D, above.]

As a result, each operative group at the three Fronts controlled only a relatively small number of bands. It is not surprising, therefore, that a one-step intermediate command structure on the German side of the lines was adequate.

Numerous variations and peculiarities in the intermediate command structures could be listed. As in the brigades and other organizational forms of the partisan movement, diversity rather than uniformity was characteristic. Nevertheless, in all the major areas of partisan activity, such an intermediate level of control was developed shortly after the partisan movement became significant. It is apparent, therefore, that such a center filled a real need in the partisan organization. It served to coordinate the activities of brigades too numerous to be commanded directly by the Front or territorial staff. Especially through its superior technical facilities—radios and airfields—it directed and supported the brigades in a fashion which could not have been achieved by a headquarters located outside the occupied territory. In view of the rapid development of these centers and the manifest advantages which they possessed, it seems likely that the high command of the partisan movement ordered their establishment in areas where they had not sprung up spontaneously, although there is no direct evidence to support this supposition.

G. DISTRIBUTION OF COMMAND FUNCTIONS

The preceding pages have presented a detailed, although far from exhaustive, summary of the complicated organization of the partisan movement at its period of greatest development. In describing the levels of command contained in this organization, frequent reference has been made to the types of orders issued by each level. These references have been based on many sources—interrogations of captured partisans, statements of postwar partisan memoirs and writers, and undocumented analyses by competent German officials. To some extent, too, they have been based on the direct evidence provided by captured Soviet orders or intercepted Soviet radio messages. However, passing references to orders issued by widely varying types of commands do not adequately cover the questions of division of command responsibility; moreover, the disparate sources necessitate a certain amount of vagueness in describing the authority of many command levels. Consequently, it seems worthwhile to present a generalized schema of command functions based on captured or intercepted orders of unquestionable authenticity.

In order to do this, it is necessary to confine discussion to five command levels, since authentic information on other types is extremely scanty. These levels are the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement; the Front Staff, as illustrated by the Leningrad Staff, the Kalinin Staff, and the Bryansk Staff; the army operative group, as represented by the Valdai Front operative group under the Leningrad Staff, and the two operative groups under the Kalinin Staff; the operative

center in the occupied territories, as represented by the 113th Leningrad "Brigade" (Leningrad Ob-last) and the Yemlyutin operative group; and finally the principal partisan unit, e.g., the brigade.

1. The Central Staff

The ordinary procedure of the Central Staff was to issue orders to the next lower echelon of command, the Front Staffs and the territorial staffs, but this procedure was altered so frequently that it can scarcely be called a rule. Instances exist in which the Central Staff issued orders addressed in a general way to all brigades as well as to the higher echelons; one signed by Ponomarenko, for example, reads, "From the commander of the Military Staff [Obviously referring to the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement] of the Partisan Movement at the Headquarters of the High Command; to all Commanders of Staffs of the Partisan Movement at the Front Headquarters (Front Military Councils), Commanders of the Operative Groups at Army Headquarters (Military Councils of the Army), to all Partisans, Commanders, and Commissars of Partisan Groups." [For full text of this order, see Appendix, Document 8.] At other times, the Central Staff issued orders directly to operative groups in the occupied territory and even to individual partisan bands. Some of these orders were detailed, providing for the execution of specific operations and even prescribing tactics to be employed. Others, of a more general nature, were exhortations to increase activity. It is hard to understand why such irregular channels were used by the Central Staff, although the fact that several of the specific orders dealt with attacks on railroads leads one to suspect that, when it was extremely important for military reasons to put the German communications out of action, these extraordinary channels were used to avoid delay. Moreover, an order which carried the prestige of the supreme partisan command was probably more likely to command unwavering obedience.

As indicated above, most orders of the Central Staff were probably sent through the Front Staffs. These included the general directives for attacks on railroads, and it is evident that the Front Staffs were especially zealous in seeing that these important commands were carried out. Orders of a more routine nature were transmitted through the same channel. For example, the operative group with the Fourth Assault Army passed on to one band the Central Staff order that outstanding partisans should be sent to a school. [See Appendix, Document 9.]

2. The Front Staff

In addition to passing on commands from the Central Staff and making sure that they were properly executed, the Front Staff issued a wide variety of commands on its own. Some of these were sent directly to brigades, either those which (as frequently happened) were subject to no intermediate command, or for special reasons, to those directly under operative groups or similar headquarters. Other orders were sent to the operative groups in occupied territory, and still others to operative groups or subordinate staffs with military commands on the Soviet side of the lines.

The Front Staff had the power to appoint and remove commanders and other principal officers of both the operative groups in occupied territory and the brigades, though in several especially important cases this function was exercised directly by the Central Staff. The Front Staff was also greatly concerned with collecting reliable intelligence information on such subjects as the location of German divisions and German preparations for gas warfare. [See Appendix, Document 13.] It demanded detailed reports on the activities of individual bands, although these were usually submitted through the channel of the operative group and/or the subordinate staff. The reports were to include information on the location of nearby partisan bands; accounts of recruiting activities of the reporting band; and information obtained from captured Germans. [See Appendix, Document 15.] In addition, the Front Staff sometimes ordered an individual band

to undertake a mission of special importance; for example, some time after Lieutenant General Andrei Vlasov began propaganda efforts for the Germans, the Leningrad Staff ordered the 1st Partisan Regiment through the Northwest Front Staff to find him and liquidate him.

3. The Subordinate Command Center on the Soviet Side of the Lines

Information on this type of command level is more scanty than on most others and relates primarily to the Northwest Front Staff, a subordinate command on the Leningrad Staff but roughly analogous to the army operative group. The Northwest Front Staff had the power of confirming all appointments of commanders and commissars of otryads and of demoting officers from these positions. Possibly other operative groups had similar duties, since the operative group with the Fourth Assault Army, for instance, demanded efficiency reports from bands under its command, but this cannot be ascertained definitely. [See Appendix, Document 10.] The Northwest Front Staff also ordered general types of operations (destruction of unspecified bridges and enemy transportation facilities, liberation of prisoners of war, etc.) and demanded reports on the activities of the bands and any information which they might have on neighboring bands. Most important, perhaps, was its apparent responsibility for furnishing supplies by air to the partisans; it received the requisitions and discussed arrangements with the bands and with the operative group, or "brigade," for sending in planes with these supplies.

4. The Command Center in Occupied Territory

The command headquarters in enemy territory (which for convenience may be called here "operative group") served as a major center for relaying orders from high partisan commands, but in addition issued many of its own directives to individual bands. These orders may be grouped under three headings:

a. *Intelligence reports.* There was a constant need for information on the location and activity of the reporting bands and of other bands with which they had contact. In addition, of course, information on the Germans was essential. Some of the orders for such information came from the operative group itself, others came directly from the *razvedotdel* (intelligence section).

b. *Supply.* Many of the operative group's communications with the brigades concerned supply matters. The brigades requested supplies, sometimes in a most urgent manner; and the operative group required reports on the existence of food depots.

c. *Operations.* The operative group issued three types of orders about operations. Some were of a general nature, requiring, for example, that the brigade conduct demolitions on railroad tracks. Others were detailed directives on special types of activities such as the use of magnetic mines, or methods to be followed in destroying water pumps at railroad watering points. The third type of order consisted of detailed instructions for particular operations; these sometimes went so far as to prescribe the number of men and the types of armament to be employed.

5. The Brigade

The range and diversity of control of the brigade (or corresponding type of individual band) over its subordinate units was so great that no generalized picture can convey its real nature. To complete the schema of command functions, however, orders issued by the 1st Regiment of the 3d Brigade of Leningrad Oblast to its subordinate units may be briefly analyzed.

a. *Personnel.* Although, as noted above in the orders of the Northwest Front Staff, all promotions or removals from otryad command posts were confirmed by the Staff, the regiment

issued the initial or temporary orders. Moreover, it provided for punishments consisting of reprimands, fines, and in one case (a sentry found sleeping on duty), death. In addition, individual partisans were cited for bravery.

b. *Supply.* Orders were issued for gathering food supplies, and for strict accounting for munitions.

c. *Organization.* The internal organization of the otryads was prescribed.

d. *Morale.* "Socialist competition" between units was ordered.

e. *Operations.* The area of operation of each otryad was prescribed. Specific otryads, platoons, and regimental staff members were designated to carry out certain assignments, and temporary commanders of special task forces were appointed.

In the survey of command functions in the partisan movement, two features stand out. One is the lack of any clear delineation of command functions between the various levels of the control structure. Established channels of command were often by-passed, and not infrequently the very top command issued orders directly to units near the bottom, disregarding several intermediate echelons. As noted above, the basic reason for this procedure was probably a need for speed and certainty of execution of the most important commands. Possibly the complicated and somewhat makeshift partisan command structure could not be trusted to transmit such important orders quickly; nevertheless, the frequent by-passing must have contributed to insecurity among officers in intermediate positions, and to a diffused sense of responsibility. Such a state of affairs is not unknown in other parts of the Soviet system, and the ill effects which it might engender are at least somewhat offset by the use of special control mechanisms.

A second feature of the command structure is closely related to the first; namely, the tendency to issue specific and sometimes minutely detailed orders on aspects of operations which in other systems might be left to officers on the spot, who presumably are more familiar with local conditions. Even the Central Staff, confined as it was to Moscow, did not hesitate to issue highly specific orders to individual bands. What effect this practice had upon the operations of the bands cannot be determined. Again, it appears to be a reflection of the usual Soviet practice of closely circumscribing the area of responsibility allowed its subordinates.

[For a discussion of command responsibility in the Red Army, see Garthoff, p. 211.]

H. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTROL IN THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT

The discussion so far has centered in the organizational system and the chain of command within the partisan movement. Control of the partisans could not be maintained, however, merely by establishing a pattern of organization and outlining a hierarchy of command. This is true of all social bodies, but it was especially true of the partisan movement because of its irregular origins and extreme diversity of organization. Moreover, as we have seen, irregular channels were used frequently in issuing orders, even when the partisan movement had reached its full force. Consequently, it is extremely important to examine in detail the ways in which the Soviet regime ensured the execution of its will.

1. Technical Means

In the introduction to this chapter, it was stated that in the Second World War the existence of new technical devices, the airplane and the radio, made it possible for the first time in history to

convert the traditionally unregulated activity of guerrillas into a means of warfare consciously planned and directed by central authorities. The role of airpower has been frequently alluded to in the preceding pages and is discussed in Chapter VI. The radio has also been mentioned; and it was unquestionably a key element in the partisans' success. In the early days of the territorial partisan movement, the activities and morale of many bands seem to have been severely impaired by their inability to establish regular radio contact with the Soviet side of the front. Prominent partisan leaders like Fyodorov and Kovpak recount the joy they experienced in first receiving radio broadcasts from the unoccupied area, and they imply that lack of receiving sets was one of the major handicaps of their bands in the early stages.

[Fyodorov, pp. 194, 309, 336; Kovpak, pp. 15, 59.]

Even when bands possessed receiving sets, however, they were often crippled by their inability to reach higher authorities to obtain new instructions or to ask for air support. The ability to request such instructions by radio transmitters seems to have saved a part of a band at Nikopol in September 1941, since Moscow replied with an authorization to disperse in order to escape enemy attack. Lack of an adequate transmitter, in spite of possession of a receiving set, possibly resulted in the complete destruction of another Ukrainian group at Novomoskovsk. [See Chap. XI, Sect. II.] Possession of adequate radio equipment was undoubtedly a major reason for the survival of the Crimean partisans. Although some of the first partisans were not provided with radios, their crucial role was certainly recognized at an early date by the Soviet officials, as indicated by the widespread use of parachutist teams provided with radio equipment—the example par excellence of the combination of new technical devices. From the winter of 1941-42 on, one can say that the partisan system of organization depended almost completely on radio. Those bands, like the roving bands, which could be provided with powerful sending and receiving sets were more or less independent and could even bring numerous other partisan bands under their jurisdiction. Smaller units, which perhaps had only feeble or unreliable sets, were subordinated to operative centers, one of whose major tasks was to maintain a powerful and constantly functioning radio station.

2. Special Means of Control

In addition to the extensive use of technical devices, the partisan command employed several special control methods. One of these methods was to make rather numerous changes in the chain of command itself. The relative frequency of such reshuffling has already been noted, and it is likely that, in addition to reasons of convenience, there was also on occasion a desire to replace a command echelon which had become inefficient or untrustworthy. Such was certainly the case when the "Moscow" parachutists were used as reorganizers of the oblast partisan organization in Western Belorussia in mid-1942. [See subsections A and E, above.] One probable purpose in giving Kovpak complete control in the Pripet region was the desire to supersede the ineffective command system there.

[Cf. Linkov, p. 378, for a report on the violent objections made by some of the band commanders in this area to being placed under Kovpak's command.]

In addition to reshuffling the chain of command as such, there was the reassignment of necessary individual officers which had the same result— the replacement of inefficient direction by more vigorous and capable leadership or the removal of sources of insubordination. Though it is impossible to estimate statistically the turnover of officers in key positions, it seems clear that such officers were changed more frequently than losses or need of rest would require. While comparatively few cases are known in which major officers were dismissed from command or were executed, a much larger number of such men disappeared for no apparent reason. The

power of the regime to relieve a partisan officer of his command was rarely, if ever, challenged. Even when defiance was physically possible, such an officer in many cases would have been reluctant to resort to it because his family was "safely" in Soviet territory.

The power of the central partisan authorities was further enhanced by the physical dispatch of staff officers to the partisan bands. Generally these either were liaison officers who remained more or less permanently with a single band or operative group, or were inspectors or special emissaries who periodically and briefly visited most of the bands and operative groups under a particular staff. At times, the function of such officers appears to have been to make an unexpected check on the morale and efficiency of the band, at others to convey a special order of the staff, or to secure essential, on-the-spot information needed by the staff.

[The best example of such an officer is Captain Ruzanov, Strokach's adjutant, who claimed to have visited at one time or another most of the bands in the Bryansk forest.]

Obviously the frequent dispatch of such special emissaries was possible only by using air transport. Taken together, the specially assigned officers and the regular liaison men were the eyes and ears of the staffs in the occupied regions, and acted as a constant reminder of the omnipresent central control. Ordinarily, however, these officers seem not to have played an important role in directing operations. In a somewhat different class, but equally important for impressing the partisans with the reality of Soviet power, were visits from high-ranking officials of the partisan movement and the Party; these seem to have been timed to help reassert control at decisive moments in the course of partisan operations.

One other type of special control should be described. Frequently individual partisan leaders were flown back to Soviet-held areas for consultation with their superiors. Occasionally a major conference of partisan leaders was held. The most important meeting of this sort took place in Moscow in August 1942; the list of assembled partisan leaders, including Yemlyutin, Kovpak, Saburov, and Shmyrev (a leading Belorussian commander), reads like a *Who's Who* of the partisan movement. Postwar Soviet accounts place enormous emphasis on this meeting, perhaps in an ex post facto effort to enhance the role of Stalin, Khrushchev, and other high Party leaders who attended. At the same time, it is certain that the meeting occurred at a crucial period in the development of the partisan movement and that major decisions were imparted to the band leaders gathered there. Probably a major purpose was to bolster the morale of the partisan commanders by impressing them with their own collective strength and with the interest the Soviet regime took in their activities—at the same time, however, reminding them that they were only instruments of the regime. Similar meetings were held on a smaller scale within the occupied regions. For example, in the late spring of 1942, Yemlyutin assembled the commanders of the major bands in the Bryansk region for a conference. The following year most of the commanders in the northwest Ukraine were called together at Kovpak's headquarters for a meeting with Korot-chenko and other high officials who had flown in.

[One of the major decisions handed down by the Soviet authorities to the partisans at this meeting concerned Kovpak's raid into the northwestern Ukraine (see Kovpak, p. 89 and Shyyan, p. 62). It also seems likely that orders were given for the bands to concentrate on the increasingly important job of destroying German rail communications.]

It is probably safe to say that the lower the level of the presiding officers at such a meeting, the more important was the role of planning and decision-making; while the higher the level of the presiding officers, the more important were morale and discipline.

3. The Party

In the partisan movement, as throughout the Soviet system, the Communist Party exercised an all-pervasive influence. Precisely for this reason, it is very difficult to define briefly its role as a control agency. From one point of view, the Soviet system is the Communist Party; all else is subordinate to, and an instrument of, this group, which was officially acknowledged as the exerciser of the dictatorship. Nevertheless, other organizations exist, other hierarchies are established, and every student of the system can point to cases in which a representative of the Party has been worsted in the struggle for decision-making by some one who nominally is lower than he in the Party scale. Consequently, such simple generalizations as "nothing exists but the Party," or "the Party (if any concrete manifestation of it is meant) is always right" are not acceptable.

The very creation of the Central Staff and other organs of the partisan command structure indicates that, to some limited extent at least, a hierarchy of authority not directly identifiable with the Party existed. As was indicated above, the creation of these organs represented to a certain degree a compromise between Red Army and Party interests. At the very top, of course, Party officials—Stalin, Zhdanov, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Khrushchev, Ponomarenko, and Beria—remained supreme. At this level, however, it is almost impossible to speak of Party interests per se, for these men represented individually or collectively all of the power elements in the Soviet system. As soon as one looks down the ladder, it becomes apparent that there was a divergency of interests and power affiliations among the partisan leadership. The second echelon partisan leaders, like all Communists, were nominally subject to the discipline of their cells, or primary Party organizations. In practice, this evidently meant little when one could appeal to powerful persons outside the cell. Certainly major officials, and even individual band leaders who possessed the confidence of high authorities, had little to fear from the action of these primary organizations, although they were certainly bound to observe the forms of procedure established for such bodies. Moreover, in some areas at least, the *obkoms* sent out special inspectors to partisan bands, who were empowered to call their officers to account for delinquencies and to recommend disciplinary measures. Apparently, actual removal and appointment of partisan officers was reserved for higher elements of the partisan command structure. [See Appendix, Documents 22 and 23.]

The foregoing account, vague as it is, is all that can profitably be said in the limited context of this chapter on the role of the Party in the control of top echelons of the partisan movement. At a lower level, however, the Party's control function was less ambiguous, although even here it was characterized by many variations and shadings. As we have just noted, the ordinary partisan—even a subordinate officer—was subject to his primary Party organization in matters of discipline and morale. The Party organization interpreted this authority broadly, not only calling its members to account for personal derelictions or political wavering, but also demanding an accounting of their record as partisan fighters.

[Fyodorov, pp. 319, 325; Andreyev, pp. 181, 279.]

As in other "operational" phases of the Soviet system, the partisan officer who was willing to go counter to Party "suggestions," and succeeded in his mission, was usually safe, while the man who failed after rejecting the Party's advice was ruined.

The Party organization within the partisan band was especially important for conducting political activities among the population in areas where the territorial Party did not exist or was too weak to undertake these tasks. In some instances the commissar of the partisan band was charged with general supervision of political activities among the population, in particular with propaganda work. Even where a vestige of the territorial Party organization existed, the partisan band seems to have carried on many of the physical tasks connected with propaganda work. It received

material from the Soviet side of the front, reproduced articles, and distributed propaganda leaflets, although the territorial Party officials may have had a decisive role in determining the content of the propaganda and were usually listed as the issuers. [See Chap. IV, Sect. I, B.]

Within this general picture there were many variations. The Party organizations of some of the bands, such as those composed primarily of isolated Red Army men or those under the domination of a strong personality like the famous leaders, S. A. Kovpak or S. V. Grishin, were probably rather secondary affairs. In areas where the territorial Party organization worked in close conjunction with the partisans or where powerful Party officials led the bands, the Party organizations were much stronger. In any case, the influence of the Party unit within the band was much stronger on the rank-and-file partisan members of the Party than on major officers. [See Chap. Ill, Sect. Ill, B.]

Of special importance in this connection was the "junior" Party, the Komsomol, which undoubtedly played a major role in controlling young partisans, who were much more frequently Komsomol members than the older ones were Party members. It is doubtful whether the Komsomol organization significantly affected the direction of the partisan organization, however, except in the few bands whose nuclei consisted of Komsomols.

[For mention of such bands, see Tsanava, II, 206, 919, 953.]

One special feature of the partisan-Party relationship deserves mention. While the partisan movement was in a sense a tool of the Party, the Party organizations in the occupied area were frequently dependent upon the partisan bands for their effectiveness and indeed for their existence. This was true of many territorial Party organizations, which could maintain themselves only by physically joining a band. Numerous Party *raikomy,* especially in the areas annexed from Poland in 1939, were actually reintroduced into their areas by the partisan bands. As has been previously noted, one method used to reintroduce the *obkom* in the West Ukrainian oblasts was to send in the *obkom* secretary as the commander of an important band.

4. The NKVD

We have already noted that the NKVD was the co-sponsor of the initial territorial partisan organization. In the over-all picture, its influence in the partisan movement was almost certainly less after the fall of 1941. Nevertheless, the prominent role of such men as Sergiyenko, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukraine, and apparently number two man in the real direction of the partisan movement, and Strokach, his lieutenant in the Ukrainian NKVD who took charge of the Ukrainian Staff, suggests that NKVD influence remained strong at the highest level of authority. At other levels, it varied. It appears to have been strongest in the southern Bryansk area, where the Chief of the Orel Staff of the Partisan Movement, Matveyev, was an *obkom* secretary described as an "old Chekist," [The Cheka was an early predecessor of the NKVD] while the commander of the operative group on the German side of the lines, Yemlyutin, was a chief official in the oblast NKVD. In this area, too, the important Kiev NKVD official, Saburov, was one of the major band leaders at an early date and continued to play an important role in the Ukrainian partisan movement. It is not entirely clear what influence the NKVD exerted in Belorussia. The Chief of the Kalinin Front Staff, Belchenko, who was very important in one section of Belorussia, was an NKVD officer. [See subsection D above; also n. 35.] The fact that L. Tsanava, who at one time was a high NKVD official in Belorussia, was chosen to write a history of the partisan movement in that area also suggests an intimate connection.

At a lower level, the control exercised by the NKVD was less pervasive, but more tangible. Every staff, every operative group, every band (at least under normal circumstances) had its "OO" section, which represented the NKVD. Available evidence indicates that the "OO" sections were the most tightly organized of all elements in the partisan structure. "OO" sections at the Front Staffs were parts of the "OO" NKVD machinery of the Red Army Front Command. "OO" sections in bands and operative groups under the territorial staffs, on the other hand, were directly controlled by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs in their respective union republic.

Control by the higher NKVD authorities was probably equally tight in both cases, but more is known about control by the union republic NKVD's during the later stages of the war. A quotation from a German summary of interrogation, in August 1944, of the member of a band brings out clearly the basic functions of the "OO" section:

The tasks of the "OO" are to maintain a watch on its own troops and also on any persons outside the unit who could impede its activity. In addition, the "OO" is charged with defense against spies. The "OO" is under a "commandant" of the [band] headquarters. He commands a "commandant" platoon of twenty-five to thirty men. Such a "commandant" platoon exists also in the battalions [of the band].

The gathering of intelligence for the [partisan] unit and battalions is directed by the "OO." In the area of operations agents are recruited from among the civilian population.

[FHO (IIb), "Auszug aus Kgf.-Vernehmungen (IIb-Nr. 3821)," 5 August 1944 (GMDS, H 3/476).]

From this and other material it is clear that the "OO" section performed two fairly distinct functions. One was the gathering of information, and need not concern us here. The other was the maintenance of security and political control within the band. In this respect the "00" section functioned as a covert control apparatus within the overt control system. Under normal conditions, it probably did not interfere with the control of operations and personnel exercised by the commander, the commissar, and other officers [Sometimes, it appears, the "OO" section chief was also one of the major officers of the band, but this was probably unusual], but it was constantly spying on them and other members of the partisan band, and was ready to intervene in case any tendency toward insubordination or laxity in carrying out the orders of the regime became evident. The NKVD personnel was able to perform this function effectively because it represented an in-group, in a sense a special elite, independently organized and in the last analysis subject in crucial matters to different authorities from those immediately commanding the partisans in general.

[One case outlined by the Germans on the basis of interrogation of a captured NKVD officer is particularly illuminating in this respect:

In mid-1944 a special NKVD task force under the command of a first lieutenant was parachuted into Vileika Oblast in Belorussia. It was sent by the People's Commissariat of State Security (for our purposes identical with the NKVD) to carry out the following functions, in relation to the brigades under Machulsky, a representative of the Staff of the Belorussian Partisan Movement, and commander of an operative group: (a) to train the "OO" [of the brigades] in espionage and counterespionage, (b) to supervise the activity of the "OO's," (c) to organize a unified network of agents, (d) to act as a surveillance and executive organ for Machulsky in relation to the bands.

At any rate, it is clear that the "OO" sections were essentially dependent on an NKVD chain of command which intersected that of the partisan movement only at a fairly high level, and that, far from being subordinate to the band commander, the "OO" section at times at least was his master. In this way, every partisan band contained a control force which might be of only secondary importance under normal circumstances, but in time of crisis could be depended on to execute the will of the Soviet regime.]

5. The Red Army

The major role of the Red Army in the control of the partisan movement has already been discussed. In comparison to the Party, which played a pervasive but ill-defined part in controlling the partisans, and the NKVD, whose role was very significant but covert, the authority of the Red Army was precise and direct. It could order the partisans in its zone of operations to carry out tasks of a military nature and could insist on the execution of these orders. As a rule, the Red Army formations appear to have adhered to the chain of command established by the creation of the Front Staffs and their subordinate partisan headquarters, but, as noted previously, in the early stages of the partisan movement many important bands were controlled directly by Red Army commands. Even at later stages of the war this sometimes occurred when a Red Army unit came in close proximity to a partisan band. [For examples, see Chap. VIII, Sect. II, B, 2.] Apparently the prestige and authority enjoyed by the Red Army were sufficient in most cases to induce band commanders to follow its orders without hesitation. In the final stages of the German withdrawal from Soviet territory, especially in the West Ukraine, such instances of direct subordination of partisan units to Red Army commands increased; sometimes the partisan bands cooperated directly in important Red Army tactical operations, such as the crossing of rivers. Cases are also known in which bands were directly incorporated, at least temporarily, into Red Army formations.

In addition to these more general types of authority, the Red Army at many times possessed a special means of checking and controlling the partisan bands. From the very beginning of the war Red Army commands frequently dispatched into the rear of the enemy special commando-type units which occasionally ranged hundreds of miles into the occupied area. The role of such units in re-forming the partisan movement in the winter of 1941-42 has already been described. In later years, their importance was less, but they continued to carry out special tasks such as obtaining information and destroying important installations. These tasks brought them into direct contact with the partisans and sometimes into competition with them, since such a force might be assigned to carry out a mission in which the partisans had failed. They acted as a source of information for the Red Army on the real activities of the partisan movement and at the same time reduced the dependence of the military on the partisans.

I. SUMMARY

In one way the preceding description of means of control helps to clarify the manner in which the partisan movement was directed. We have seen that the Soviet regime was not dependent on any single system of control, but had at its disposal numerous alternative chains of command and methods for impressing the partisans with its authority. If one method or channel proved ineffective, an alternative one was available. At the same time, however, the existence of these diverse methods, and especially of the several chains of command, reinforces the impression gained in the examination of types of orders: namely, that here was no clear-cut allocation of responsibility.

Apparently the average partisan band commander was never certain from whom his decisive orders would come. Nominally he was subordinate to a specific intermediate command level of

the partisan structure. However, a higher level of this structure might at any time issue superseding orders directly to the band commander. Moreover, under certain circumstances, he might receive orders directly from the Red Army. The existence of this multiple command channel was only the beginning of his perplexity. He was also subject to the advice of the Party organization, which on certain occasions might affect operational matters. It was undoubtedly risky to disregard this advice, unless he was very sure of his own Party status. Moreover, the ubiquitous "OO" section, with its considerable independence of the partisan chain of command, exercised a constant surveillance over the band commander, and could scarcely fail to influence his actions. In some cases, he was permanently assigned the liaison officer of the partisan staff to which he was subject—a person whose observations could not be wholly ignored. And his band might at any time be visited by an inspection officer from this staff, or a high partisan or Party official. Finally, the band commander might himself be called suddenly to Soviet territory to report to the highest officials of the Party and the partisan movement.

In the scope of this chapter one can only indicate the complicated nature of this control system and the resulting perplexity of its objects, and perhaps hint at the reasons behind it. To a considerable extent, this system was a more or less accidental growth, resulting from the complex and diverse origins of the partisan movement. To some extent, the varied functions of the partisans—military, political, propaganda—required that they be directed by different agencies. Moreover, like all totalitarian systems, the Soviet regime required numerous competing elements, each checking and reporting on the other. One may suggest, however, that another related factor was present. By failing to delineate clear-cut areas of responsibility, by depriving the individual partisan officer of the security attendant upon the occupancy of a definite niche in a recognized hierarchy, the system denied him the feeling that he was secure so long as he acted in accordance with definite orders from a designated superior. As a result he was thrown on his own and became a more pliable and helpless instrument in the hands of the regime.

Many band commanders, of course, were not directly subject to all of the pressures listed above. As a rule, orders from headquarters other than the partisan operative group and the Red Army unit which was concerned with the band were infrequent enough not to form a major preoccupation of the commander. In most cases it was possible, rather than actual, interference by conflicting authorities which made for insecurity among command personnel. As previously noted, if the commander was a man of bold and decisive character, he could disregard the advice of the Party organization and the NKVD officer in his band, and if successful would not be called to account. Probably "family arrangements" such as those frequent in other phases of Soviet organization were sometimes made between representatives of the various chains of command in one band. Such arrangements might more or less tacitly have provided that the "OO" section chief, the commander, the commissar, and the Party would settle all disagreements among themselves, without reporting to their respective headquarters outside the band. All of these circumstances tended to mitigate in practice the ambiguity of command responsibility; however, at crucial times lack of definite patterns of responsibility must have made the partisan commander's position unenviable.

§IV. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion on means of control presented a review of many major aspects of the partisan organization and command. The broader political implications of the partisan movement have been treated in a wider context in the introductory chapter. Therefore, instead of summarizing such aspects of the movement here, it seems best to present a brief analysis of the rationale which lay behind the systems of organization used in the partisan movement, and the implications which these systems may have for the future.

There were two basically different systems of partisan organization. The territorial, described above in Section II, provided for relatively small partisan detachments (fifty to one hundred men) in each administrative subdivision of the occupied USSR. This system was to have been erected on the framework of the Party and NKVD territorial administrations, and all their command personnel as well as many of the rank and file would have been drawn from among their trusted members. The units would occasionally have conducted hit-and-run attacks against small enemy forces and would have terrorized collaborators, but would have rigorously avoided major engagements. Permanent camps, primarily supply depots, would have been maintained in isolated districts but the partisans would not have attempted to control any definite area. The emphasis would have been on stealth and surprise. In some cases, it was apparently hoped that partisan members could resume their normal occupations of ostensibly peaceful workers after the completion of each operation. The points of command above the bands were to have been underground Party committees, which would usually have been located in cities. Their members would have perhaps hidden in concealed quarters or perhaps have acted under the cover of normal occupations.

The way in which this scheme collapsed has already been described, and there is no need to review it here. It should be emphasized, however, that its success depended on several factors which were absent during the first months of German occupation in the USSR.

1. *Preparation.* Such a system needed a great deal of planning and preparation before the arrival of the enemy. Camps and supply depots had to be carefully constructed and completely camouflaged. Precise and accurately defined systems, including alternative methods, of communication had to be established between the bands and the underground centers. In particular, powerful hidden radio transmitters and secret landing fields were necessary. The personnel of the detachments had to be selected and trained with extreme care. This was necessary not only to ensure the partisans' loyalty and technical proficiency in disruptive tactics, but to acquaint them with the purposes of their activity and to make certain that they would continue to mount vigorous attacks even if the result was the decimation of their units. In fact all of these prerequisites were lacking, or at least very scarce. Planning at a high level had taken place before the war, but the persons who were to carry out the plans had never even been informed of the possibility of partisan warfare. A brief period of feverish and haphazard training and preparation took place after the war began, but the attention of responsible authorities was too divided and the time too short to achieve major results. Finally, the unexpected rapidity of the Red Army retreat produced a wave of panic which swept up many of the partisan cadres, while the chaos of the retreat disrupted physical preparations.

2. Support of the population. This territorial plan of partisan warfare, relying on concealment and stealth, presupposes the active support of a large majority of the population in the occupied area. The bulk of the population remaining in most of the territories occupied by the Germans was by no means strongly pro-Soviet. From the Soviet standpoint, it was at best passive, unwilling to cooperate with either old or new master until the victory of one was apparent; at worst, important elements of the population revealed the composition and hide-outs of the partisan bands to the Germans and cooperated in wiping them out by force.

In those areas where the territorial partisan movement enjoyed a measure of success, i.e., the North Caucasus and especially the Crimea, such success was due to the time available for preparation, the ability to profit from previous experience, and probably the presence of a greater proportion of Party and NKVD officials. Even in these areas, however, the territorial system survived only by abandoning several of its prescribed features, in particular the plan for a network of small groups in each district and the reliance on stealth. Indeed, changes were absolutely essential in these areas, partly because the contrast between favorable and unfavorable

partisan terrain is sharpest there, and partly because a large element of the population consisted of Moslems bitterly hostile to the Soviet regime. That the Soviet authorities continued to use the territorial system at a late date under these adverse conditions indicates, however, that they favored it. Where feasible, the system was extremely useful *to* the regime, for it retained firm control of the partisan movement in the hands of the elements which were most reliable and most capable of maintaining the subordination and loyalty of the remaining population of the occupied areas. Under ideal circumstances it could accomplish more with less expenditure of resources than any other type of partisan movement, for it required no large additional increment of cadres to ensure loyalty. Moreover, since they avoided large-scale engagements, partisan detachments needed no extensive supply of arms and munitions.

The almost universal failure of the territorial system meant that another type of organization had to be relied on. The system, if it can be so called, described in Section III was as much the product of circumstances as the result of conscious planning. To be sure, the later partisan movement was not, as some authors have claimed, a "spontaneous popular uprising." It was rather the result of the efforts of thousands of supporters of the Soviet regime who, through the fortunes of war, found themselves in occupied territory, or who were sent in purposely to organize resistance to the occupier. Only gradually did the higher authorities of the Soviet regime introduce order into the haphazard growth of this type of organization. The control system superimposed on the partisan bands did indeed succeed in maintaining an extremely high degree of overt loyalty to the regime. It also guaranteed that the bands endeavored to execute missions of military or political importance. It did not, however, introduce a sufficient degree of uniformity and efficiency to transform the partisan bands into units capable of conducting military operations comparable to those executed by Red Army formations of similar size. Moreover, the resulting partisan organization could operate effectively only under certain favorable conditions, and not throughout the occupied territory during the entire period of occupation.

In order to understand why the partisan movement took the organizational form it did after the winter of 1941-42, it is necessary to examine very briefly the nature of the war on the eastern front. In a sense, the German attack on the USSR was a tour de force of astonishing magnitude. Considering how incredibly brutal and stupid the German policies in the occupied area were, it is amazing that for two-and-one-half years after the defeats during the winter of 1941-42, the Wehrmacht continued to occupy substantial portions of the Soviet Union. From early 1942 on, the Soviet forces were considered to have superiority in the air; they had a large and increasingly superior artillery force; and from the very beginning of the war, they possessed a wide numerical margin in manpower. Nevertheless, the better organization, leadership, discipline, and military qualities of the lower ranks of the Wehrmacht enabled the Germans to hold out until 1944. Rarely, if ever, has an invading force maintained itself on enemy territory for so long a period of time, when it was so enormously inferior in manpower and military equipment. Occupation under such circumstances involves very severe risks and disadvantages. It was the business of the Soviet partisans to maximize these risks and enhance these disadvantages.

German inferiority in technical equipment gave the partisan bands enormous advantages. There was little to fear from German airpower since it was too scarce to be assigned to antipartisan operations frequently; on the other hand, the bands received matériel and personnel of incalculable value through almost unimpeded air transport. Lack of armor and fire power on the part of German and auxiliary outfits made it possible for the partisan unit of brigade size, even though of dubious military quality, to fight at least a delaying action by supplying a screen of fire from its numerous automatic weapons. Since the Germans lacked equipment and air support, only large, carefully prepared offensives could overcome the major partisan concentrations. These offensives were necessarily infrequent; as a result the partisans could completely control

large areas for months at a time. Lack of manpower restricted the Germans to major towns and roads in those regions where the partisans were really active, and left the countryside almost at the mercy of the Red forces.

These conditions made feasible the creation of large brigades. Under favorable conditions, such units could fight German forces of considerable strength, were generally well able to dispose of collaborator outfits, and could present an imposing appearance to the population. Such forces, multiplied many times, and coordinated by headquarters both within and outside the occupied territories, were gradually able to transform most of the northern part of these territories into a sort of twilight zone, which was neither German domain nor fully regained by the Soviets. As the Germans weakened, the area of partisan control was extended, and more and more of the population in the "occupied" areas were made to feel that they were already reincorporated in the Soviet system.

Large bands of this type, relying on the possession of fairly definite base areas and subsisting on food supplies drawn from a population controlled by force, had definite limitations. Since the Germans lacked air-power and armor, the partisans could from time to time conduct sweeping raids into open country, such as the famous raids of Kovpak and Naumov in the Ukraine. They could not engage in continuous activity in such open regions, however, for, as long as the Germans had the strength to react forcefully, they could send in sufficient regular troops to wipe out the poorly trained and undisciplined partisans who were then caught far from the shelter of marsh and forest. Since the large band was the only generally successful form evolved by the Soviets during the Second World War, the richer half of the occupied territories, the Ukrainian plain, remained relatively free of partisans until almost the end of the occupation.

CHAPTER III Composition and Morale of the Partisan Movement

Earl Ziemke

§I. Composition of the Soviet Partisan Movement

A. DISTINCTIVE COMPONENT GROUPS

1. The Peasants

The peasants in the occupied territory were united in one overwhelming desire—to have the collective farm system abolished. Few peasants were convinced Communists, and the political system and form of government were matters of considerable indifference to them.

[Prop.Abt.W.beim Befh.d.rueckw.H. Geb. Mitte, "Taetigkeitsbericht," 31 March 1942 (GMDS, OKW/749). *Ibid.,* "Stimmungsbericht," 15 November 1941 (GMDS, OKW/634).]

They were practical-minded opportunists, willing to tolerate the German regime if they could extract economic advantage from it. German occupation policy frustrated most of their hopes.

Although they were disappointed in the Germans, the peasants never identified themselves with the partisans. While they may not have been entirely indifferent to the major issues in the war, they wanted economic stability above everything else. They disliked turning their produce over to the Germans, but they liked even less turning it over to both the Germans and the partisans. Their concentration on economic self-interest made them reluctant to join the partisan movement, since, from their point of view, it was disruptive and economically a waste of time.

Paradoxical as it may seem, however, the peasantry probably furnished between 40 and 60 per cent of the total partisan recruits; virtually all of the peasant recruits were drafted into the movement. Since the partisans Were able to move freely through most of the rural districts, it was a relatively simple matter for recruiting agents to enter the villages, select men, and march them off as partisans. The Germans liked to picture the process as kidnapping; in fact, however, this type of recruiting was carried on so widely that it assumed the appearance of a regular administrative procedure.

Within the partisan movement the peasants remained a distinctive group. They comprised nearly nine-tenths of the so-called "forced recruits." The draftees were a distinctive though not a cohesive group. They were held in the partisan movement less by force, as the Germans claimed, than by the hopelessness of their situation. The partisans claimed a legal right to their services and, in view of the progressive disintegration of German control, the peasants could not help but recognize this right. They wanted to be neutral, clearly an impossibility; consequently, without surrendering any of their basic attitudes, they allowed themselves to be drawn into the partisan movement where they formed a passive, unenthusiastic group.

2. The Urban Contingent

The working population of the cities was more strongly influenced by communism than the peasants. The Soviet program of industrialization had impressed the workers.

[*Ibid.,* "Tätigkeitsbericht," 31 March 1942 (GMDS, OKW/749).]

Though the standard of living was abysmally low, German investigators reported that the city people were pleased with the advances which had been made: greater opportunities for education, low admission prices at the theater and cinema, and new factories and public buildings.

[*Ibid.]*

Nevertheless, at the outset, many of them hoped to benefit from the German occupation. However, the occupation, if anything, soon increased their support for the Soviet system. They believed that progress had been made under the Stalin government. By contrast, the war brought widespread destruction and the collapse of economic activity in the cities; the urban residents, who had believed themselves the most advanced element in the population, experienced a rapid economic decline to a level below that of the peasantry

The position of the city laborer was hopeless. Market prices bore no relationship to pay scales, and a week's pay was not enough to live on even at a subsistence level. While the worker was sometimes fed on the job, his family literally starved. The result was a loss of desire to work and, finally, a refusal to work. Such conditions forced many of the workers, particularly young, unmarried ones, into the ranks of the partisans.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu, "Entwicklung der Partisanebewegung in der Zeit vom 1.1—30.6.1942." 31 July 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, HGr Nord 75131/113).]

It is impossible to estimate how many left the urban areas to join the partisans. Probably their numbers were small in relation to those of the peasants and former Red Army soldiers. By and large, they were motivated less by ideological considerations than by economic pressures, but in comparison with the peasants, for instance, they were a dedicated group.

3. The Intelligentsia

The term "intelligentsia" is used here less with reference to the upper intelligentsia—professors, writers, editors, etc., most of whom were evacuated and who in any case were few in numbers—than to the broad, lower reaches of the class—local doctors, teachers, and administrators of various kinds—and the subprofessional people—clerks, bookkeepers, and others. These men, because they thought in terms of their careers, were likely to believe that they had to choose one side or the other. Furthermore, they did not possess the personal anonymity of the peasantry, for instance, and it therefore behooved them to give serious consideration to their attitudes. From the partisan point of view, they were people well worth recruiting in order to deprive the enemy of the benefit of their skills and because they were persons whose attitudes generally influenced others.

In the main, the members of the intelligentsia had fared better under the Soviet regime than they did under the Germans. Many of them were men who had been in line for advancement; under the Germans their careers were placed in jeopardy. Even those who had been dissatisfied with the Soviet system soon learned that they would gain nothing from the German occupation. Of the 5,000 teachers in Vitebsk Oblast, to cite one instance, the great majority were unemployed most of the time between 1941 and 1944. As a result a large number made contact with the partisans as early as May 1942.

[201. Sich. Div., Ia, "Monatsbericht," 6 May 1942, p. 18 (GMDS, 201 ID 29196/2).]

The intelligentsia formed a sizable group in the 1941 partisan units, comprising most of the officer contingent and a segment of the rank and file as well. As the movement grew, the intelligentsia declined in numerical importance, although it remained an important element in the success of the partisan movement.

4. Red Army Stragglers and Prisoners of War

The German Army took over 3,000,000 prisoners in the first six months of the war. Several hundred thousand prisoners were taken in each of the great battles of encirclement—Bialystok, Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev, and so forth. It is certainly true that not all of the Soviet soldiers trapped behind the lines surrendered. If, as can probably be safely estimated, one in ten avoided capture, the total would have come to more than 300,000. Then, too, in the first flush of success, the Germans released some thousands more, chiefly Ukrainians and others who were considered anti-Soviet. Wretched conditions in the prisoner-of-war camps forced more thousands to try to save their lives by escaping. By January 1942 the former Soviet soldiers at large in the occupied territory probably totaled between 300,000 and 400,000.

These men formed a new social group with a very sharply defined reaction pattern. They had no legal status; if they came into contact with the Germans, the best they could expect was to be sent to a prisoner-of-war camp, which was tantamount to a death sentence. With the front moving rapidly eastward, most of them found it impossible to return to the Soviet side; moreover, many had had enough of war and were not eager to return to the Red Army. A few were assimilated by the local population, but most remained involved in the war regardless of their personal desires. As soldiers they had a clear and potentially enforceable commitment to the Soviet Government, in whose eyes they were already all but guilty of treason. Therefore they were constantly under pressure to rehabilitate their reputations, and this pressure became irresistible once the tide of the war turned in favor of the Soviet Union.

German policy added other pressures. In July 1942, the chief of the German secret field police described the problem as follows:

The partisan movement received its greatest increment of strength from the stragglers of the great battles of last year and the escaped prisoners of war who at first had settled down in the villages. Some of them had even married local women in order to pass as natives of the village. In the reorganization of the system of agriculture, these people were not given consideration, and when they reported for duty with the local militia or applied for work in Germany, most of them were turned down because they possessed no credentials. Besides that, as has already been explained, at the beginning of the drive to recruit workers for Germany, the wildest rumors were spread concerning the fate of the recruits. Finally, when it became known that former Soviet soldiers were to be interned in German prisoner-of-war camps, they left their places of employment in droves and went into the forests where they joined partisan bands.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu, "Entwicklung der Partisanenbewegung in der Zeit vom 1.1.—30.6.1942," 31 July 1942 (GMDS, HGr Nord 75131/113)]

The massive upswing of the partisan movement which followed the successful Soviet winter offensive of 1941-42 brought thousands of former army men into the movement, until, by the summer of 1942, they formed the largest single increment. In July 1942 the Germans estimated that the stragglers and escaped prisoners of war made up 60 per cent of the total partisan strength.

[*Ibid.]*

In 1943 and 1944, the partisan units consistently averaged about 40 per cent former Soviet Army men. In many ways these men became the backbone of the partisan movement: they had military training and experience; for the most part, they had neither family nor property ties in the occupied territory; they had definite legal and moral obligations to the Soviet Union; and their previous experiences led them to prefer partisan activity to life under the German occupation.

5. Communist Party Members

Some bands organized in July and August 1941 evidently consisted of up to 80 per cent Party members.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt.K.Verw., "Erfahrungen ueber Aufbau, Aufgaben, Auftreten und Bekaempfung der Partisanenabteilungen," 15 January 1942 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.217).]

Such units, however, were not typical even in this initial period; still, the earliest bands had a relatively high concentration of Party members—between 25 and 40 per cent. After the spring of 1942, when recruitment was begun on a mass basis, the Party contingent declined sharply in relative numbers. The captured Party records of two partisan companies operating in the spring of 1942 show that one company had 6 (4 per cent) Party members out of a total strength of some 150 men; [707 Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindnachrichtenblatt fuer die Truppe Nr. 16," 10 November 1942 (GMDS, 707 ID 27797/4)] the other, with a total of 142 men, had 7 (5 per cent) Party members, 3 (2 per cent) Party candidates, 24 (16 per cent) Komsomols, and 108 (77 per cent) men with no Party affiliation.

[Gen.Kdo. XXXXVI. Pz.K., Ic, "Partisanenregiment Shabo," 2 June 1942 (GMDS, 23 ID 24182/16).]

In September 1943 a brigade with a total strength of 1,113 men had 40 (3.5 per cent) Party members, 87 (7.8 per cent) Party candidates, 334 (30 per cent) Komsomols, and 652 (58.7 per cent) men with no Party affiliation.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Nr. 5394/43 geh.," 19 September 1943 (GMDS, PzAOK 3 40252/7, Anlage 30-33). Cf. the estimates in John A. Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism* (New York: Randon House, 1961), p. 163; though the latter are based entirely on Soviet statements, they correspond very closely to the estimates given in the present text.]

It appears that Party men, including candidates, rarely made up more than 10 per cent of the strength of individual units. The percentages of Komsomol members ran higher, between 15 and 30 per cent, probably because the requirements for admission to the Komsomol were less stringent than for the Party and also because a large proportion of the partisans fell in the younger age groups. In addition, the ranks of the Komsomol were not so severely thinned by Soviet evacuations and German police action as those of the Party membership.

The Party men remained an elite group in the partisan movement throughout the war; no other group ever achieved significant influence. At the same time, the Party segment was important chiefly as an instrument through which Soviet control was strengthened; there is no indication that the Party members acted as a spontaneous, creative guiding force.

6. Collaborators

The taint of collaboration fell on a great many people in the occupied areas. By definition, anyone who did not actively fight the Germans was culpable. Soviet propaganda constantly reiterated the questions: "How did I fight the Fascists? How did I defend my native land? Where was I when the entire Soviet people were engaged in a heroic fight against the enemy?" Those who could not produce satisfactory answers were promised short shrift at the hands of the returning Red Army. To nearly everyone, then, participation in the partisan movement was valuable chiefly as an alibi, a means of avoiding prosecution as a collaborator. One consequence of this situation was that in the later years of the war the Red Army apparently was inclined to regard all partisans as a crew of former collaborators trying to save their skins by hiding in the woods and putting up a feeble show of resistance.

The most significant collaborator group was the so-called "military collaborators"—the policemen, army auxiliaries, and members of German-organized indigenous military units. These men acted as the main German antipartisan force. Estimates on their number range from 800,000 to 2,000,000.

[George Fischer, *Soviet Opposition to Stalin* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 45.]

If all the types—police, regular military formations, and army auxiliaries—are included, the total can be safely set at over 1,000,000 (more men than served in the partisan movement).

Once it became clear that the Soviet Union would win the war, the situation of the military collaborators became desperate. The partisans tried to complete their demoralization by promising an amnesty to those who deserted and enrolled in partisan detachments. The appeal was successful. Occasionally entire collaborator units went over to the partisans. In the summer

of 1943, in Belorussia, an SS detachment composed of 2,000 former prisoners of war was taken over to the partisans by its commander, a former Soviet Army colonel. Several months earlier, in the same area, 700 Tatars from another German unit had deserted to the partisans.

[PzAOK 3, Ic, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Pz.AOK," 1 February 1944 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 62587/12).]

The mass defections were more dramatic but less important than the constant trickle of individual deserters who made their way to the partisan brigades. The small groups of local police, scattered throughout the countryside, were particularly affected; every German withdrawal occasioned a wave of desertions from their ranks.

In general, the promised amnesty was honored by the partisan units. The collaborators made useful recruits, for many of them had had military training; moreover, their prospects of surviving a desertion back to the Germans were extremely poor. In contrast to the Germans, the partisans were usually careful to avoid giving the lie to their own propaganda. On the other hand, in terms of additional strength for the partisan movement, the collaborators were not important. By mid-1943, when the collaborators were prepared to desert in significant numbers, manpower was no longer a problem for the partisans. In the last year of the war the collaborators may have composed between 10 and 20 per cent of the strength of the movement.

7. Women

To the Germans, who summed up their conception of the role of women in society with the slogan *Kirche, Kueche, Kinder* (church, kitchen, and children), the enlistment of women for combat duty was an outright abomination. The Soviet Government, on its part, publicized the participation of its women in partisan activity as evidence of superior dedication and resolution.

In the detachments women were used chiefly as scouts and intelligence agents. Soviet intelligence tended to rely heavily on women agents, particularly in partisan-infested territory where women made the best agents, since men of military age were liable to arrest on sight. Some of the women had training as radio operators and nurses, and a large proportion of the doctors assigned to the partisan units were women. The trained nurses and doctors had officer status. Sometimes the women were assigned to combat missions along with the men, but it appears that, aside from intelligence missions, they were more often used as medical personnel, cooks, and washerwomen.

Few women were drafted. For the most part, they were volunteers, motivated by political convictions, a desire for adventure, or the wish to achieve distinction. Some who were trained on the Soviet side of the front were not volunteers in the strictest sense, since their assignment was often not a matter of choice; however, even they were usually Komsomol members and were otherwise politically reliable.

Almost every partisan detachment had some women members, although they usually numbered no more than 2 or 3 per cent of the total unit strength and hardly ever more than 5 per cent. This was roughly the number of women that could be utilized effectively in a given partisan unit. Women added little to the combat strength of their detachments. Their value as scouts and intelligence agents has already been mentioned. Aside from these jobs, they served mainly as noncombatant personnel, and because of the limited food and equipment of the partisans, such noncombatant personnel detracted from the combat potential of the units.

A principal reason, if not the principal reason, for including some women in nearly every partisan detachment was that a woman to share his quarters became one of the perquisites of the partisan officer, along with a Nagan pistol and, when he could manage it, a leather windbreaker. Customarily, the officers from the brigade commander down to the battalion commanders "married" the women enlisted in the unit. The rank and file had to content themselves with less convenient arrangements. The result was a cynical attitude toward the participation of women in partisan activity. With a few women cast into an exclusively male society, the sexual element became dominant. The lower-ranking partisans were kept from intimate association with the women for reasons of morale and discipline; and the women became the property of the officers, which by implication gave them officer status, with such attendant privileges as quarters with the brigade staffs, relief from combat assignments, and so forth. The women, in turn, were often willing to content themselves with their contribution as officers' "wives." More serious still, as the following excerpt from a partisan diary reveals, they sometimes came to believe that their association with the officers elevated them to command status:

. . . Everyone who married while serving with the unit will not be regarded as married and must live in separate quarters [from his wife] in the companies to which he belongs. The women of the staff are being assigned to the individual companies and their immediate transfer to these companies is demanded. This caused a great uproar which I consider justified. This order was necessary because the wife of the chief of staff of the brigade, Malvina, considered herself rather than her husband as the chief and continuously interfered in military matters. Furthermore, there are many women in the unit who literally do nothing and consider themselves only as wives of the staff members. Such conditions could not be tolerated any longer. However, it was not necessary that the dance *[sic]* should start this way. The most important [way] to begin would have been to ask the officers [not to permit] their wives to interfere in official business any longer. The way [in which it actually was done] makes the entire business smell like an enforced separation from a legitimate wife. [The writer, a battalion politruk, may have had a wife himself.]— ***Appendix, Document 74.***

One indirect result of this sort of situation was that captured women partisans often were exceptionally well informed and could give valuable information.

B. SHIFTS IN COMPOSITION

The Soviet partisan movement was by no means a static institution. Virtually no generalized statement can be made about it without qualification as to place and time. The partisan movement of 1943, for instance, was so different as to be more of a successor than a lineal descendant of the 1941 movement. This state of constant flux was evidence of both strength and weakness. It demonstrated the ability of the Soviet command to exploit new situations as they arose. It also indicated that, had the occupying power been able to take advantage of new trends by reversing them or preventing their development, the partisan movement might have been crippled at any one of the several stages in its development.

In 1941 the partisan movement bore something of the character of a volunteer organization. It depended heavily on Party members and others who, if the word is used loosely, could be considered volunteers. The number of men impelled by eagerness to throw themselves into partisan activity was probably small. Most were brought into the movement by fairly conventional motivations—a sense of duty, acquiescence to established authority, a desire for recognition, and so on. With the exception of three or four detachments in the Ukraine and a few more in the Crimea and near Leningrad, the units formed were small, seldom as many as 100 men. They were expected to remain in their home localities, drawing on local men for

reinforcements and replacements. There are indications that if the military situation of the summer and fall of 1941 had been prolonged until well into 1942, these detachments would have disintegrated or, at best, stagnated. They displayed few signs of genuine vitality. With the shift which came in the spring of 1942, they were rapidly engulfed in the masses of new partisans, although a large number of officers from these early units managed to retain and augment their commands.

The most decisive and clearly discernible shift followed the victories of the Soviet Army in December 1941 and January 1942. The partisan movement came to life with a rush, stimulated by the Red Army and Soviet policy. The victories created a new atmosphere, charged with a nice mixture of fear and optimism, which facilitated a mass recruitment drive in the occupied areas. The most important contingent of recruits came from the Red Army stragglers left from the 1941 battles. The group characteristics of these men: their hopeless position vis-à-vis the Germans, the necessity to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the Soviet regime, their vulnerability to reprisals, and so on, have already been described. They were better material than most of the men taken in later. In a limited sense, they were volunteers; they had been turning to partisan warfare in small groups since as early as July and August 1941. After the winter battles they joined (or were drafted) in large numbers until, by the summer of 1942, they amounted to nearly 60 per cent of a total partisan strength of 150,000 men.

At the same time, in the spring of 1942, the partisans began drafting men on a wide scale. Many former Red Army men were so inducted, although most of the draftees came from the indigenous civilian population. The draft was supported by official Soviet and partisan policy, which made all men between the ages of fifteen and sixty liable for service. It served two purposes: it increased the numerical strength of the partisan detachments, and it tied up manpower which might otherwise have been exploited by the Germans. The drafted men were far from being ideal partisan material; they were almost exclusively peasants, whose general characteristics were described above, and they had exhibited a remarkable lack of enthusiasm for participation from the outbreak of the war. The draft gained momentum in 1942 and continued until 1944. By the end of 1942, however, it reached a ceiling imposed by food and equipment supplies. Thereafter, the drafted men remained the major source of replacements, the result being that losses and attrition in the other groups were compensated for by drafted peasants, who by late 1943 composed about half the total partisan strength.

In 1943, there was a new wave of volunteers. Many of these people were of doubtful antecedents, military and political collaborators or managers and professional people who had tried to carry on their peacetime occupations under the German administration. Others either decided "to get on the bandwagon" or joined because they found life between partisans and Germans intolerable. How many such people were taken into the partisan movement cannot be estimated; it is likely that in the Ukraine, in particular, they became a significant element. They were important for two reasons: they signalized and, in part, hastened the disintegration of German authority in the occupied areas; and they lent credence to the opinion which undoubtedly prevailed in some Soviet quarters that the partisan movement was chiefly notable as a refuge for slackers and collaborators.

C. NATIONALITIES

The nationality problem was of minor significance in the Soviet partisan movement. Four-fifths of the total partisan strength was concentrated in Belorussia and the Russian SFSR. The remaining major area which came under the German occupation, the Ukraine, was not partisan territory until after the summer of 1943. The absence of intensive partisan activity there might, with some justification, be credited to national attitudes, but on closer examination the

nationality factor declines in significance. It is true that the Ukrainians reacted more sympathetically to the German occupation than either the Russians or Belorussians; on the other hand, popular opposition to the occupation was not decisive in the growth of the partisan movement, even in the northern regions. A variety of other elements—distance from the front, unsuitable terrain, less social and economic dislocation, absence of large numbers of Red Army men cut off by the German advance—take precedence over nationality in accounting for the weak Ukrainian partisan movement.

The majority of the partisans, again four-fifths of the total, were either Belorussians or Russians. By accident, an admixture of other nationalities appeared everywhere. Since remnants of Red Army units and escaped prisoners of war formed a large segment of the partisan movement, Ukrainians, Tatars, Cossacks, and members of the Caucasian and Asiatic nationalities turned up in nearly all detachments. As the war progressed, deserters from German collaborator units composed of Tatars and Cossacks appeared in increasing numbers in predominantly Russian or Belorussian units.

D. AGE GROUPS

By Soviet decree all males in the occupied territories who had reached the age of seventeen were required to report for duty either in the partisan movement or in the Soviet Army. The minimum and maximum age limits were fifteen and sixty, but the bulk of the partisans fell within the seventeen to thirty-five age group. The presence of large numbers of Red Army stragglers made this very satisfactory age distribution possible. Men over forty were recruited, but apparently in limited numbers; in view of the tight supply situation there was constant pressure to reduce the overhead of inefficient personnel. A noteworthy, though small, group among the older men consisted of veteran partisans from the Civil War years. Although most were in their fifties and sixties, they were valuable because they helped create romantic associations with the Civil War partisans. They also had experience; some, like Shmyrev who commanded the First Belorussian Partisan Brigade, became successful unit commanders.

§II. Conditions of Partisan Life

A. THE SIZE OF THE MOVEMENT

The exact total strength of the Soviet partisan movement will probably never be known. The best evidence indicates that it reached a total of 30,000 men by 1 January 1942, rose to 150,000 by the summer of 1942, to 200,000 by the summer of 1943, and then declined slightly to 150,000-175,000 by June 1944 as partisan territory was retaken by Soviet forces.

[The official Soviet war history, put out by the Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya velikoi otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza,* éd. P. N. Pospelov *et al.* (Moscow: Voennoye Izadtelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR), IV (1962), 468, states that there were 120,000 partisans in touch with the Central Staff in January 1943; 250,000 in January 1944. In view of the fact that many units were not in regular contact with Soviet headquarters at the earlier date, these figures correspond fairly closely to the estimates given in the present text.]

The personnel turnover resulting from casualties, sickness, and desertions over a three-year period, brought the total of men who at one time or another participated in the partisan movement to about 400,000 or 500,000. These figures represent the number of partisans enrolled in regular, permanently organized combat units. In addition there was a host of agents, saboteurs, demolition teams, and others, who sometimes operated independently and at other times were in contact with the partisan detachments.

More significant for this study is the size of the combat detachments. These tended to be large; the brigades ranged from 300 to 2,000 men or over, with the standard unit strength averaging between 800 and 1,400 men. The trend toward concentration of partisan forces in brigades and, further, in operative groups and centers was an extremely significant feature of the Soviet partisan movement. From the point of view of the Soviet command it had great prestige value; it also facilitated supply operations. The large units tended to become entities in themselves, impersonal and readily amenable to Soviet control. It had effects within the movement as well. The size and apparent permanence of the brigades gave their members a valuable sense of security. The feeling of being isolated, impotent, and hopelessly outnumbered in small detachments which nobody knew or cared about had impaired the efficiency of all the 1941 detachments and had led many to collapse altogether. The brigades, on the other hand, were part of an established force, in close contact with the Soviet command, and carried out recognized and even heroic missions. The individual partisan counted for less in the mass organization; at the same time, he achieved a greater sense of personal importance since he could claim membership in one of the well-known brigades and thereby reassure himself that his services would not go completely unnoticed. The large units also made possible the recruitment of doubtful elements. A 1,000-man brigade could carry 40 to 50 per cent drafted men. Within operative groups whole brigades, with the exception of their officer complements, could be organized, utilizing only drafted men or former collaborators.

B. RECRUITMENT

The partisan movement was not a volunteer organization. There was a constant trickle of volunteers, but the majority of members in the non-officer group were drafted. According to one German source, most of the volunteers in 1942 were young men from towns and cities where they could not find employment.

[Prop.Abt.W.beim Befh.d.rueckw.H.Geb.Mitte, "Stimmungsbericht fuer den Monat August 1942," 4 September 1942 (GMDS, OKW/733).]

In the countryside the draft was proclaimed publicly, generally in terms similar to the following:

Members of the [Soviet] Armed Forces, Citizens in the Area Temporarily Occupied by the Bandits!

All members of the armed forces who escaped from the pocket [Operation "Seidlitz," which cut off a Soviet army in June 1942] and are at home, also all men in the class of 1925 [those born in 1925], report to your regular units or join the partisan units! Those who remain in hiding and continue to sit at home in order to save their skins, and those who do not join in the patriotic war to help destroy the German robbers, also those who desert to the Fascist army and help the latter carry on a robber war against the Soviet people, are traitors to the homeland and will be liquidated by us sooner or later. Death to the German occupiers! We are fighting for a just cause! In 1942 the enemy will be totally destroyed.

2 August 1942

[XXIII A.K., Ic, "Uebersetzung, Tagebuch der Kampfhandlungen der Partisanenabteilung des Oblt. Morogoff," September 1942 (GMDS, XXIII AK 76156, Anlage 12).]

With the German hold on the occupied territory greatly weakened by the winter battles of 1941-42, the partisans were able to regularize their draft procedures. In a district south of Bryansk the detachments were ordered to draft all men between the ages of seventeen and fifty and also

childless women fit for military service. Three-man examining commissions, each including a medical officer and a representative of the special section of the NKVD ("OO"), were created. The detachment commanders were required to draw up lists of men eligible for service, submitting the following information about each person: first and last names and patronymic, place of birth, date of birth, Party membership, nationality, education, occupation, military service status, active service in the Red Army, rank, membership in partisan or self-defense units and reasons for leaving, and names and residences of relatives.

[Korueck 532, Ic, "Auszug aus dem Befehl fuer die Partisanen-Abteilungen im Rayon Wygonitschi," 19 October 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 30233/66)]

In May 1942 a Soviet Army battalion appeared near Bryansk and, according to its orders, carried out recruitment for the partisan movement in the following manner:

1. Drafted all Red Army men who had remained in the area as survivors of the encirclement battles or as discharged prisoners of war.

2. Mobilized the men born in the years from 1923 to 1925.

3. Organized partisan units. (The Red Army men were to be used, first, to bring the strength of the battalion up to 300 men and, after that, to reinforce the partisan units.)

[339. Inf.Div., Ic, "Interrogation of Sidor Kletschko," 5 July 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, DW 55 B).]

From time to time, local officials of the German administration reported on the recruiting procedures. A member of the *Ordnungsdienst* (the indigenous police) described conscription in his district, where all the men between the ages of sixteen and forty-five from five villages had been summoned to appear for examination and induction at a central collecting point. There, he said,

They were given physical examinations by a military mustering commission and were either taken along by the partisans or sent home if they were unfit for service. The partisans were led by Russian officers in black uniforms with regular insignia of rank. Those found to be fit were told that they had been drafted into the Red Army and now had to render service as soldiers.

. . . All of them were immediately armed with rifles and assigned to companies and platoons.

[GFP Gr. 729, Aussenkdo. 5, "Bandenbewegung im Gebiet noerdlich des Iput," 3 October 1942, (GMDS, 221 36509/11, Anlage 1).]

On another occasion a village mayor reported that he and three other men from the village had been taken from their homes at night by armed partisans. They were marched to a collecting point where, in the course of the night, sixteen men were assembled. They were registered and assigned to squads of six men to be sent to various units. The mayor stated that in the course of the registration one of the partisans, probably a politruk, addressed the recruits as follows :

"You have now joined the partisans." To the reply that we had been brought by force, he answered, "That is not important. Those who do not want to go along can say so." No one answered, since all believed they could count on being shot if they protested. He [the

politruk] continued, "You are not to regard yourselves as drafted men, but as voluntary members of a partisan unit which has set itself the task of defending the fatherland."

[Chef Sipo u. SD, Teilkdo. Surash, "Partisanenmeldung fuer die Zeit v. 19-21.5.42," 21 May 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, 205 ID 24746/5).]

The method of processing men after they had been assigned to detachments is described in the German documents.

Each recruit goes through a probationary period and, as a rule, is not given a weapon until he has been with the unit at least four weeks. He is first detailed to tend the cattle and horses and perform other menial duties. Later, he may stand guard without a weapon, accompanied by an armed partisan. During the probationary period he is constantly under close surveillance. If a recruit manages to desert in spite of all this, all the members of his family are sought out and killed. When the unit changes camps all the recruits who have not yet demonstrated their reliability are shot. During the probationary period, the recruit's name is submitted to the Soviet authorities by radio for a background check. If the recruit comes through the trial period successfully, he is given a rifle and told that from that moment on he is a dead man if he falls into the hands of the Germans. The procedure is effective. It makes infiltration by our agents difficult, gives sufficient time for screening out undesirables, and places the remaining men in the position of believing themselves too deeply involved in partisan activity to risk reprisals from both sides by desertion.

[Kav.Regt. Mitte, "Erfahrungsbericht ueber die Kampftaktik der Partisanen und Moeglichkeiten unsererseits die Banditengefahr zu beschraenken," 23 June 1943 (GMDS, HGr Mitte 65002/22).]

This statement must, of course, be regarded more as a composite of practices which appeared frequently in many partisan units than as a description of standardized procedures.

Periodically, particularly in the spring and summer of 1942, the partisans were able to conscript more men than they could use. The surplus recruits, wherever possible, were sent across the front to Soviet territory. A German summary report, written in the summer of 1942, contains this account:

In addition to forced recruitment among the male population, which has been observed to bring up to strength or bolster the partisan units, regular draft notices are distributed in the villages according to which the male population are enjoined to assemble in the center of the village. The draft notices state that anybody who does not appear will be classified as a deserter and will be punished according to the laws of war. All men are taken through the front to the Red Army. . . . The population were warned for the last time that in case they did not appear at the proper time, their property would be confiscated and their houses burned down.

[Chef Sipo u. SD, Einsatzgr. B, "Taetigkeits- und Lagebericht der Einsatzgruppe B fuer die Zeit vom 16.8-31.8.1942," 1 September 1942, p. 4 (GMDS EAP 173-e-12-10/2).]

The commander of the First Belorussian Partisan Brigade, whose men held the Vitebsk Corridor, one of the major points of contact between the partisans and the Red Army, claimed that 25,000 recruits had been sent through the front from his operating area by August 1942.

[P. Vershigora, *Lyudi s Chistoi Sovestyu* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1951), p. 393.]

That this traffic, involving thousands of men, was carried on regularly during 1942 and 1943 is substantiated by German observations. Occasionally the men were armed, trained, and returned to the occupied territory as partisan replacements.

[Gen. Kdo. II.A.K., Ia, "Bandentaetigkeit im Maerz 1943," 29 March 1943 (NMT, NOKW 2369).]

C. TRAINING

Within the individual partisan detachments the levels of training varied widely. After the summer of 1942 a well-organized brigade might have had 1-5 officers and a similar number of noncommissioned officers on detached duty from the Red Army; 10-20 other officers, usually former Party or civilian officials; 20-30 specialists trained in Soviet territory, most of them demolitions men; 150-200 former Red Army men, either stragglers or escaped prisoners of war; 50-100 men who had some training in Soviet territory before being committed as partisan reinforcements; 100-200 men with no formal military training but with several months' experience as partisans; 200-400 raw recruits, chiefly peasants with neither training nor experience; 1-10 women, some with no training; 1 or 2, perhaps, trained behind the Soviet lines as nurses or radio operators. Such a brigade would, in fact, have ranked above average. Not infrequently, brigades which suffered heavy losses carried as many as 75-80 per cent inexperienced recruits.

This large number of raw recruits was less of a handicap than it might seem at first glance. The Soviet authorities were willing to sacrifice quality for a mass movement, since the missions demanding skilled specialists could, in any event, be carried out by small trained detachments sent in for the purpose. While the wholesale drafting of untrained men may have decreased the over-all efficiency of the units, it served a purpose by sequestering manpower which was potentially useful to the enemy and it strengthened the Soviet hold on the people of the occupied territory.

Training was one of the major functions of the partisan units. The brigades regularly scheduled military and political lectures, inspections, and weapons drills. There was ample time for such activities. One partisan stated that: "There were days, especially in the spring when the snow started to melt and the partisans, who were badly shod, could hardly move, when only the most important operations were carried out, i.e., procuring food or performing some sort of urgent job. Usually for a few weeks in the spring we sat in the camp and took military training, just as in the army."

[Harvard University, Russian Research Center, Project on the Soviet Social System, interview protocol series B 7, # 3, p. 31.]

Most of the brigades were sedentary and operated from fixed bases, from which they sent out details to perform specific missions. The combat activity of a brigade was generally low in relation to its numerical strength. From the point of view of targets, opportunities, and equipment, the brigades were very often overmanned. In the larger partisan centers, where between 12,000 and 20,000 men were sometimes concentrated in a small area, it was possible for entire brigades to go for periods of several months without any noteworthy combat assignments. Under such circumstances, recruits were given training in handling weapons, employed in building fortifications, or sent on foraging details.

The training programs of the brigades were hampered by two major difficulties: one was lack of *esprit de corps;* the other was the quality of instruction. Partisan warfare requires a certain

amount of individual initiative even in the lowest ranks. In combat, for instance, mass maneuvers are of no importance; the individual must be able and willing to make his own decisions. Personal dedication to the cause is also necessary; one defector could, conceivably, bring about the destruction of an entire brigade. Generally speaking, while the brigades gave their drafted recruits a basic knowledge of tactics and some training in the handling of weapons, they failed to stimulate genuine *esprit de corps.* The peasant draftees remained, at best, indifferent. The most debilitating effects of the situation were kept in check by close surveillance of the men and by brutal reprisals against the families of deserters. Furthermore, the course of the war after 1941 made it clear to even the most reluctant recruits that their future did not lie with the Germans.

To achieve and maintain a reasonable standard of quality in the training of partisans remained a problem throughout the war. With a large contingent of inexperienced officers and a high percentage of low-caliber recruits there was constant danger of the partisan movement sinking into various kinds of erratic behavior, losing its military usefulness, and, possibly, becoming a political liability. The situation was dealt with in part by the development of rigorous external control and in part by the infusion into the partisan detachments of regular army officers and noncommissioned officers and of personnel trained on the Soviet side of the front. By late 1942 every brigade had some Soviet-trained partisan officers or regular army officers to supervise training and discipline.

Early in the war an extensive partisan training program was launched on the Soviet side of the front. It proved particularly valuable in the crucial 1941-42 period. By mid-1942 there were fifteen training centers located in the vicinity of Voronezh alone. Others were established at Voroshilovgrad and Rostov, and those at Moscow, Leningrad, and Stalingrad were among the largest. These schools trained partisans and diversionists who were to carry out special sabotage and espionage missions, provide the nuclei for new partisan units, or take over the leadership of existing detachments. For this type of training Communists and Komsomols were preferred, but Party affiliation, except in courses for leaders, was not mandatory.

In one of the centers near Voronezh the course of instruction lasted six weeks, and the classes numbered between 170 and 250 men. A school at Moscow turned out classes of 450 men. At the Sport Institute in Leningrad, training was given to Estonians who had been evacuated by the Red Army. Schools near Rostov turned out specialists in espionage, railroad demolitions, disruption of communications, and aircraft signal work. The NKVD operated additional centers of its own. Thus, one NKVD school at Moscow trained officers. At Voronezh, classes of 400 to 500 men and women, selected for their special skills as telegraphers, railroad workers, pickpockets, and so on were trained in sabotage and espionage techniques.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/GFP, "Entwicklung der Partisanenbewegung in der Zeit vom. 1.1.—30.6.1942," 31 July 1942 (GMDS, HGr Nord 65131/113).]

A typical training course covered the following:

1. Training in demolition of rail lines, bridges, airplanes, and airports and use of various kinds of explosives.

2. Instruction in how to act in the German rear area; how to seek out local Communists; how to secure German identification papers; how to recognize German rank insignia.

3. Instruction in map reading and use of the compass, and knowledge of terrain.

4. Instruction concerning methods of carrying out missions for the Soviet intelligence service.

[*Ibid.]*

At the conclusion of the training period the classes were divided into groups of eighteen to twenty persons, each under the command of an officer and a commissar. Dressed in civilian clothes, or occasionally in uniform, the units were parachuted behind the enemy lines. Some groups were assigned several women or children to act as scouts and agents. Standard armament consisted of one light machine gun, several submachine guns, four rifles, four hand grenades, and five kilograms of explosives.

[*Ibid.]*

In the spring of 1942 the Germans observed that partisans trained behind the Soviet lines were being sent into the occupied territory in large numbers. For example, it was known that, within a period of two to three weeks early in 1942, 450 parachutists were landed in a small area west of Mogilev in Belorussia.

[*Ibid.]*

Very often these people merged with locally organized detachments, where they assumed command, instituted strict discipline, and organized militarily useful operations.

Not all the partisans sent in from Soviet territory were highly trained, however; many training courses were superficial. Often units were hastily formed, armed, given some vague instructions concerning what was expected of them, and dropped by parachute, or else they infiltrated through the German lines.

D. EQUIPMENT AND FOOD SUPPLY

Although captured enemy weapons and ammunition were used extensively by the Soviet partisans, viable combat units could not be maintained solely on the basis of a hit-or-miss collection of enemy equipment. After 1941 the partisans relied increasingly on weapons, ammunition, and explosives of Soviet manufacture brought in by air. The logistics of this supply operation and its contribution to military effectiveness are not of primary concern to this study; however, its possible effect on the individual partisans is worth mentioning. By the very nature of his position, the partisan is an underdog, fighting an enemy vastly superior in numbers and equipment; consequently, anything which reduces his feeling of fighting against hopeless odds is likely to boost his morale and increase his military effectiveness. The Soviet partisan undoubtedly derived a sense of confidence from carrying a new Soviet-made submachine gun or rifle. Indeed, by 1943 and 1944 he was frequently better armed than the second- and third-rate German troops sent against him.

The Soviet Air Force was not able to transport food in addition to weapons and ammunition to the partisans; moreover, it was sound strategy to make the partisan movement a drain on the agricultural resources of the occupied territory. Thus the partisans had to live off the land. Foraging became a major activity, almost the exclusive occupation of some units. A captured partisan gave this description of the food situation in his brigade:

We brought ten horses along to the camp and, in the course of the month, slaughtered and consumed eight of them. It was possible to secure enough potatoes by uncovernig the storage bins of the burned-out villages in the neighborhood. In the same fashion, we secured some rye. In a village eleven kilometers from the camp, we found a larger supply of unthreshed rye which we threshed and milled, using millstones found in the village. At the

beginning there was no salt at all. We never had canned goods although the officers may have had some.

[218. Inf.Div., Ic, "Aussagen einer Banditin, Krankenschwester," 10 June 1943 (GMDS, 12 ID 35220/17).]

Irregularity characterized the partisan food supply. A given unit might eat well for several weeks or months and then be reduced to sheer starvation for a similar period. There was a chronic shortage of salt, which was sometimes brought in from Soviet territory.

[References to the salt shortage appear repeatedly in the documents pertaining to the food situation and partisan morale. The shortage also affected the civilian population. The Germans frequently used salt as a premium for extra work.]

Horsemeat, potatoes, and unmilled grain were the staple items of the diet.

Some of the large brigade complexes gained virtual control of extensive districts, where they were able to regulate the food supply to some extent by establishing storage centers, gathering herds of cattle, requisitioning from the peasants, and controlling the rations of their subordinate units. The complexes, however, had the nearly fatal tendency to overstrain the resources of their zones of operation. At best they managed to achieve a delicate balance between consumption and supply. If a German counter-operation intervened to upset that balance the recovery of the entire complex was often seriously delayed or rendered impossible.

E. THE CAMP

The permanent camp was a distinguishing characteristic of the Soviet partisan movement. The climate made substantial housing a necessity throughout the greater part of the year. In the main regions of partisan activity the terrain afforded cover for fairly extensive installations and Soviet preference for large units of 1,000 or more men led to reliance on a relatively secure permanent base rather than on mobility of the unit. The permanent camp was a characteristic of the first detachments organized early in 1941. Prior to the occupation, some of the most elaborate installations of the entire war were constructed in the Ukraine. One of these was described in a German report of 1942:

. . . construction of the reinforced dugouts was ordered. Taking tactical considerations into account, the dugouts were arranged to form a triangle [three dugouts facing each other so that each could be covered by small arms fire from the other two]. Each dugout had space for fifteen to thirty men. The average size was eighteen by twenty feet, with small passages leading off from the sides for protection against shell fragments in case of attack. The depth at the entrance was about four feet, and the floor slanted toward the rear to a depth of nine feet. The doorway was slightly more than a yard high. Beside the door there was a glassed-in window which offered observation into the forest [and could serve as a fire port]. The dugouts were blended into the forest cover. Trees of various sizes were planted on the roofs of the dugouts, and the excess earth from the excavations had been hauled away. A yard-wide passage ran down the center of each dugout. Wooden platforms built on either side of the passage served as bunks. The walls were faced with small logs, partly covered with boards. A stove for heating and cooking was built in one corner. Most of the cooking, however, was done in a separately constructed kitchen dugout. The chimneys ran up through the roofs, usually into a tall tree, so that the smoke would be dispersed among the leaves and branches. Each dugout also had a table and benches.

At the time the work on the dugouts was begun, large stocks of food—salt pork, beef, flour, and so forth—were brought into the forest and buried in sealed containers. The food caches were scattered over an extensive area and carefully concealed. Ammunition and explosives were stored in well-built underground storerooms, likewise well camouflaged.

[GFP Gr. 725, "Partisanen-Erfahrungsbericht," 22 January 1942 (GMDS, HGeb 30910/37.]

The dugout *(zemlyankd)* described above was constructed according to specifications issued by the Soviet central authorities after it was learned that, left to themselves, the partisans were likely to solve their housing problems in various fanciful but impractical ways.

[*Ibid.]*

The dugout became standard in all partisan areas, and the Germans were often moved to something approaching admiration for the simple utility and painstaking camouflage of the structures. A German lieutenant submitted the following report on an attempt to locate and destroy a partisan camp:

With a patrol composed of one officer, two NCO's, nine men, and thirteen OD men [indigenous police] I left Kletnya at 1230 to clean out this partisan nest. The patrol was guided by a captured partisan under guard. At the beginning we marched along fairly good sled trails. . . . Scattered blood stains on the snow indicated that we were on the right trail. [That same day, in a skirmish, German troops had captured two partisans and wounded several others.] After one hour we reached the end of the sled tracks.

From there on faint footprints were observed which followed winding forest paths. Here and there more blood stains appeared. Frequently, secondary tracks led off into the forest, obviously made to confuse pursuers. Zigzagging back and forth in the forest I lost my sense of direction, but I think we went in a generally northwesterly direction. At 1400 ... we came to a clearing. . . . According to the prisoner we were still about two miles from the camp. Knee-high snow made movement difficult. . . .

After another twenty minutes' march [we came to another small clearing where one track branched off to the left]. We had all gone on past, when an OD man who had followed that track called our attention to a man standing in a fir thicket sixty to seventy yards away. He had already opened fire on us. Splinters of birch twigs fell around me. We returned the fire as the man turned and ran. I sent several men [to cut him off].

With the OD men and three or four of our men, I formed a skirmish line and moved forward through the forest. The fleeing man, of whom we caught occasional glimpses through the trees, fired on us several more times. After we had moved on another 500 yards or so, I suddenly found myself in a clump of scattered fir trees. Catching sight of horses' hooves hanging out of the trees [carcasses hung there for storage], I thought I had come upon the dugout we were looking for. As I circled the spot, I was fired upon from nearby. I took cover and noticed for the first time an excellently camouflaged bunker-like structure about thirty yards away. I ordered hand grenades thrown into the bunker. ... It was empty. . . .

The bunker was solidly built. The walls were made of five to six inch logs, extending only about a foot above the level of the ground. The dugout was covered with earth, with only the entrance and window left uncovered. The roof was supported by two log beams and covered with a foot of ground. . . . The bunker on the inside measured about twenty-six feet

in length, sixteen feet in width, and six feet in height. Nearby we found a supply of firewood, a kitchen dugout, and a well. The small stock of food was worthy of note.

[Kdo Baran, "An die 2. Kompanie Cholopenitschi," 24 February 1942 (GMDS, 286 ID 9970/2).]

The camps varied in size. Ordinarily, however, the brigades and other larger units did not establish a single contiguous camp but set up separate sites for each otryad or even for each company. A brigade might be dispersed over ten or twenty square miles. Groups of brigades occasionally occupied areas of several hundred square miles. In the larger concentrations the partisans proceeded as well to the construction of machine gun and mortar emplacements, earthwork fortifications, and roadblocks.

In the final analysis, the camp provided barely tolerable living quarters. In the spring and the fall, if the bunkers did not fill up with water, they were certain, at least, to be damp and muddy. In the winter they could be heated but only at a risk of revealing their location. In the daytime they were never heated; and at night, as long as snow was on the ground, fires were lighted only for cooking, in order to avoid smoke stains on the snow which could be detected from the air.

F. TERRAIN AND CLIMATE

The forests and swamps were the best allies of the partisans, for they provided cover and some protection. At the same time, however, they made for a rather strenuous existence. Under pursuit, two or three days of steady marching could bring whole units to the verge of collapse. Accounts similar to the following appear frequently in the partisan diaries:

We are crossing the Lebyashka swamp. The villages round about are in flames. In the distance the thunder of cannon can be heard. Every five to six hundred yards we have to rest. We sit right down in the water, and, after ten minutes, move on. Everyone is weak. The swamp sucks us down. We sink in often, sometimes up to the hips. There is no end; the forest seems to be moving away from us. Finally the order is given to rest until dawn. During the march it is hot, but when one stands still for a few minutes he begins to shake with cold. Everyone lies down to sleep. Camp fires are forbidden; the swampland is flat; and the Germans are all around. We lie pressed against each other for warmth. One wakes often because his wet side is freezing.

[Korueck 584, "Ein Tagebuch, das von der Gruppe Findeisen 21.9, gefunden wurde," 21 September 1942 (GMDS, Korueck 38998/2).]

The author of the diary was killed on 17 September 1942. From 7 to 17 September the unit had wandered in the swamps, using up its food supply; finally, it requested permission by radio to change its operating area. By 17 September, however, the unit had broken up as groups became separated or lost in the almost impassable terrain.

[Korueck 584, "Gefechtsbericht ueber die Bandenbekaempfung in Abschnitt des Kdt. rueckw. A. Geb.," 3 October 1942 (GMDS, Korueck 38998/2).]

The climate added to the rigors of the partisans' life. Summer brought hordes of mosquitoes and flies. In July 1943 a German antipartisan expedition reported, "After two days our horses are already showing signs of strain, mostly because the clouds of mosquitoes prevent them from grazing."

[Abwehrtrupp 210 bei PzAOK 3, le, "Unternehmen 'Winter,'" 29 July 1943 (GMDS, OKW/209, Anlage 6/4).]

The captured documents of one partisan unit which operated near Bryansk reveal that in the summer of 1942 the unit, unable to endure the mosquitoes, abandoned its camp in the forest and moved into villages where it was exposed to destruction by the Germans.

[GFP Gr. 639 b. PzAOK 2, "Dem Panzerarmeeoberkommando 2 Ic/A.O.," 20 July 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 30233/66).]

Winter imposed other hardships. After the war a partisan commander wrote, "The cold, incidentally, is no ally of the partisans. Maybe it did hold the Germans back from an offensive, but we suffered from it to a much greater degree."

[A. Fyodorov, *The Underground Committee Carries On* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), p. 416.]

In the winter the forests provided less cover, and the chances of detection by air or ground observers were greatly increased.

G. MEDICAL SERVICES

In one unusual case, a unit of 500 men, organized in 1941 in the Ukraine, had seven doctors, one for each company and two with the staff.

[Ltd. Feldpolizeidirektor bei der 444. Sich. Div. "Monatsbericht," 5 November 1941 (NMT, NOKW 1519).]

At the end of the same year, the German secret field police reported: "It has been repeatedly determined that, in the larger partisan camps, there are also doctors available who care for the health of the partisans. In December 1941, in Tatin-Bor, a partisan hospital was reported, and later captured, which was headed by a Russian doctor."

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt.K.-Verw., "Erfahrungen ueber Aufbau, Aufgaben, Auftreten und Bekaempfung der Partisanen-Abteilungen," 15 January 1942, p. 27 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.717).]

In the north, somewhat later, probably not before the late summer of 1942, nearly every brigade had at least one doctor and several nurses, some of whom had medical training. The trend toward large, sedentary partisan detachments facilitated the establishment of relatively adequate medical service. Some of the doctors were flown in to the units, but because of their potential usefulness both to the Germans and the partisans, it was preferred to recruit as many as possible in the occupied territory— by force if necessary. The brigades and brigade complexes usually set up some sort of permanent hospital facilities. In January 1944 a deserter from the partisans of the Mogilev center in Belorussia gave this information:

The hospitals of the partisans are located in the same forest as their camps. [There were four regiments of between 1,500 and 2,000 men each.] They [the hospital structures] are dugout bunkers with windows, and they are well-furnished. The Osmanov Regiment has at its disposal five hospital bunkers plus two bunkers for contagious diseases. There is plenty of trained, capable medical personnel. The over-all direction of the hospitals is in the hands of a doctor brought in from Moscow.

[H.Gr.Mitte Ia, "Ein Ueberlaeufer aus der Gegend nordostw. Klitschew berichtete ueber die Organisation der Banden in diesem Raum," 5 January 1944 (GMDS, HGr Mitte 65002/69).]

Partisan hospitals are mentioned frequently in German reports. During an operation against the partisans north of Borisov (June 1943) SS troops captured a complete dental station. Generally, the facilities in the occupied territory were designed to handle only emergencies or minor wounds and illnesses. Serious cases were evacuated by air to Soviet territory. [See Chap. VI.] A partisan woman doctor, captured in September 1942, described this procedure:

The recent [August 1942] German attack brought the number of wounded cases to eighty, more than half of them serious. All but five of the seriously wounded were evacuated by air at night prior to 8 September. During that time [31 August to 8 September] about six aircraft, always three to a flight, made three trips per night between Valdai [on the Soviet side of the front] and Suselnitsa. They were small planes which could carry only one seriously wounded man at a time. Since 8 September the nearness of German troops has made it impossible to continue the air traffic.

[Lw.Div. Meindl/Ic, "Vernehmung Nr. 74," 22 September 1942 (GMDS, AK X 44431/78).]

In the larger partisan centers it was often possible to land two-engined planes (C-47's and similar types) and evacuate fifteen to twenty men on each flight.

[404. Inf.Div., Ic, "Vernehmungsbericht Nr. 22P," 5 June 1943 (GMDS, 4 PzD 34335/16).]

Hospitals, air evacuation, and the presence of medical personnel greatly stimulated partisan morale and made the men more willing to take risks. At the same time the medical service suffered from one outstanding weakness: during a German counteroperation, when the greatest number of casualties were likely to be suffered, air evacuation was generally disrupted and the ground facilities were often in such a state of hopeless confusion that all too frequently, at this time of greatest need, medical service was not available.

The quality of the medical service was impaired by chronic supply shortage. The Grishin Regiment, one of the best detachments, raided hospitals in the occupied territory for its medical supplies.

[OKH/GenStdH/Abt. FHO, "Nachrichten ueber Bandenkrieg Nr. 7," 8 December 1943 (GMDS, H3/738).]

A former nurse, interrogated after the war, declared that sometimes her unit had plenty of supplies, and at other times it had nothing at all. She reported that most of the medical supplies came from a doctor employed by the Germans, with very little being sent from the Soviet Union. Generally bandages were washed and reused. Narcotics were always scarce and were used sparingly. There was a shortage of soap, and vodka was used as a surgical disinfectant.

[Harvard University Refugee Interview Project, B Schedule Interview No. 41, p. 17.]

A doctor, who deserted in June 1943, stated that her unit had received a small quantity of serum for immunization against typhus and a supply of special soap for debusing. She also stated that orders "from Moscow" forbade the use of medicine in the treatment of venereal diseases.

[404. Inf.Div., Ic. "Vernehmungsbericht Nr. 22 P," 5 June 1943 (GMDS, 4 PzD 34335/16).]

In another detachment ten men and two women who had contracted syphilis were executed on the grounds that it was impossible to cure them under the circumstances.

[707. Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindlage im Hauptbandengebiet Kamenez-Mamajewka," 22 December 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, 707 ID 27797/4, Anlage 239).]

(This was undoubtedly a disciplinary as well as a medical measure.)

The general health level in the partisan movement is difficult to assess. The Germans did not learn of any serious incidence of epidemic diseases. Typhus broke out regularly, but it was endemic in the Soviet Union. A former partisan commander wrote that the most frequent ailments in the partisan units were rheumatism, scurvy, pellagra, boils, and toothaches.

[Fyodorov, p. 422.]

According to the statement of a former partisan nurse, stomach and intestinal disorders were the most common complaints.

[Harvard University Refugee Interview Project, B Schedule Interview No. 41, p. 17.]

Probably the major health hazards were contaminated water, poor and insufficient food, and, to a lesser extent, exposure to cold and dampness. Both observers agree that health problems were less serious than might have been expected. On the other hand, captured tables of strength of the Grishin Regiment indicate that in 1942 the unit lost 261 men through sickness, which meant a loss of 38 per cent of its total strength of 737 men. In the same period only 52 men were lost in combat and 20 deserted. The loss through sickness of 27 men in August 1942, 192 in September, and 29 in November suggests that some type of epidemic disease was responsible.

[OKH/GenStdH/Abt. FHO, "Nachrichten ueber Bandenkrieg Nr. 8," 8 December 1943 (GMDS, H3/738).]

No other instances of this sort have been discovered.

§III. Group Characteristics

A. INFLUENCE OF THE OFFICERS

The brigade commander was probably the most important individual in the partisan movement. On the German side of the front there was no permanently assigned superior troop commander. Of necessity, the orders he received from superior authorities were usually general rather than specific, with the exact method of execution left to his discretion. The brigade itself was often the commander's creation. With no regular supply or recruitment services, the size and operating efficiency of the brigade frequently depended on the commander's ability to organize stocks of weapons and food. His energy and ability in finding recruits and integrating them into the brigade were undoubtedly important. To a certain extent, the reputation of the commander, based on his demonstrated ability to keep his men fed and armed, and his skill as a tactical leader (one who achieved success without excessive casualties) served to attract recruits and contributed to the spirit of the brigade. The commander's reputation probably also influenced the amount of support that the brigade received from the Soviet side. Above all, the operating efficiency of the entire partisan movement depended almost entirely on the individual brigade commanders. The brigade was the focal point for the control of partisan operations. Orders from higher echelons could be put into effect only by the brigade commanders. Since each brigade operated as a self-

contained unit, the execution of orders depended directly on the energy, intelligence, and daring of the individual commander to a far greater extent than in any comparable regular military unit.

The decisions of the brigade commander were determined by his response to two conflicting pressures: one from the Soviet authorities, in the form of demands for bold, militarily useful operations and the other, amorphous but extremely persistent, pressure from the mass of the partisans, in the form of passive insistence on provisions for personal security and reduction of risks. Almost invariably the commanders responded to the pressure from below by reinterpreting orders from the Soviet side, by falsifying reports, and by selecting relatively safe missions and avoiding more important but dangerous assignments. There are numerous instances of brigade commanders who allowed their brigades to sink into passivity but no demonstrable cases of commanders who hewed precisely to the line of Soviet requirements. The best commanders managed to find a middle course, keeping their units active militarily and simultaneously controlling the drift toward passivity by recognizing and abetting it within reasonable limits.

With the partisan brigades operating independently, no clearly defined standards of officer conduct and performance were established. The Soviet authorities sponsored the development of a partisan officer group modeled on that of the Red Army. Regular army officers were installed at all levels in the brigades. The nonprofessionals in the movement—the Party men and others—were given assimilated army ranks. In some brigades the officers wore Red Army uniforms and insignia of rank. One of the most remarkable, and in some respects incongruous, results of the introduction of formal military procedures was the appearance of bureaucratic tendencies in the partisan movement. The brigade staffs sometimes were inclined to keep aloof from their subordinate units, avoiding personal contact, and relying instead on written communications, with the result that the partisan movement developed into what the Germans sometimes called a "forest bureaucracy." The units accumulated substantial files of orders, directives, and reports, and, in some cases at least, became absorbed in the proliferation of paper work because it was fashionable.

Despite these tendencies, however, and the effort to introduce formal military procedures, the partisan officer contingent developed some distinctive characteristics. In partisan warfare it was impossible for the Soviet Union to control men purely by the force of delegated authority and the trappings of rank. In his postwar memoirs, a partisan commander wrote: "But restraining people only by the force of an order or a Party decision, that is, relying exclusively on the discipline inspired by the authority of the command and the Party leadership, could not be done for long in underground work."

[Fyodorov, p. 353.]

Because of the relative isolation of each partisan brigade, there was no chance for a sharply defined class of partisan officers to develop. The officers were inclined to identify themselves more closely with the interests of the rank and file in their own brigades than with the officer groups of the other brigades or of the movement as a whole. Moreover, there were strong leveling processes at work in the brigades. The officers enjoyed some privileges, primarily of a minor nature. Generally speaking, the officers faced the same hardships and dangers as the men. The result was that the officers tended to rely on personal authority rather than on formal military authority. While this may have been regarded with grave misgivings by the Soviet regime, undoubtedly it contributed greatly to the cohesiveness of the partisan units. The men and officers developed a community of interest which centered on their own brigade. Many who could not generate much enthusiasm for the Soviet cause itself sometimes developed strong feelings of loyalty to their own detachment or to their commanders. At the same time, the

process led to a weakening of Soviet control, since the officers and men tacitly joined forces to evade or interpret in their own favor the directives imposed from above.

Much of what has been said about the partisan officers can be said about the commissars and "OO" officers as well. In the long run, they, too, were likely to identify themselves with the group interests of the brigades and to modify their conceptions of their own roles as Party or NKVD representatives. The commissars and officers were less sharply distinctive groups in the Red Army. Many of the brigade commanders had at one time been commissars, and many others were as much Party men as the commissars who served with them. At the lower levels, the political officials were often not career men but *ad hoc* appointees. Less is known about the NKVD "OO" officers, but it appears that many of them were not professionals, and the "OO" in the partisan movement was not the thoroughly integrated organization that it was in the Red Army.

While the trend in the partisan movement was toward informal officer-man relationships, the authority of the officers was not sacrificed. On the contrary, the conditions of partisan warfare brought the determined, resourceful, and even brutal officer to the fore. Punishments were harsh and swift; summary executions were commonplace. Instances of abuse of authority were far from rare. Still, even deserters usually believed that such harsh measures were necessary. They seemed to think that the standards of justice were attuned to the conditions of partisan warfare. [See below, Sect. Ill, D. 3.]

The Germans frequently claimed, with some justification, that the majority of the partisans were held in the detachments only through fear of the officers and commissars. For the drafted men, former collaborators, and other allegedly undependable elements, who did indeed form a numerical majority in the partisan movement most of the time, fear of the officers was a primary motivation. It was their misfortune to be treated as a class in which each man at any time might be subjected to indiscriminate and ruthless intimidation. On the other hand, the men against whom there was no presupposition of unreliability could work out some sort of personal *modus vivendi* and needed to fear punitive action by the officers only for specific offenses.

B. THE INFLUENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Party influence in the partisan detachments centered in the commissar system. Generally speaking, the commissar had two functions: as the equal and associate of the commander he shared responsibility for military command decisions [for a discussion of the function of the commissar system in relation to the military command structure, see Chap. II], and as the political officer he had direct responsibility for political affairs within the unit. As is customary in Soviet practice, of course, everything had its political aspect. In the partisan detachments, cut off as they were from direct contact with Soviet society, it was the primary function of the commissar system to maintain the all-embracing, pervasive political atmosphere which was the dominant feature of life under the Soviet regime.

[The commissar system was never abolished in the partisan movement as it was in October 1942 in the Red Army.]

The formulas of Soviet socialism, plans, norms, Socialist competition, self-criticism, agitation, and so forth, were transferred and adapted to partisan warfare. To the outsider the "Socialist" approach to partisan warfare often appears ludicrous. For instance, quantitative norms were established to govern the awarding of decorations. According to a document found among captured papers of the Kovpak band, the Order of Lenin could be awarded to a partisan commander whose units had accomplished one of the following:

The destruction of a large railroad center with the result that it is put out of use for not less than 20 days; the demolition of 2 railroad bridges not less than 100 meters long with the result that they are out of use for not less than 20 days; rendering a railroad station unusable for a period of not less than 30 days, including the destruction of the water tower, the track and crossings, the depot and shops, and other installations; the capture of not less than 10 railroad trains involving the liberation of not less than 10,000 persons being shipped from the USSR to Germany as forced labor; the liberation of not less than 5,000 men from a prisoner-of-war camp; the destruction of not less than than 10 railroad trains loaded with military equipment, supplies, men, fuel, food, and material of general military usefulness; the capture of an enemy supply point containing military equipment, motor fuel, food, or not less than 300 vehicles; the capture of not less than 500 horses belonging to the German-Fascist army; the destruction of an armored train of the enemy; the destruction of 10 enemy tanks; the capture for use in the unit of 1,000 rifles, or 150 machine guns and submachine guns, or 15 heavy machine guns, or 20 company and battalion (sized) mortars, or 9 heavy mortars, or artillery of different calibers.

Within the detachments strong efforts were exerted to have life proceed in accordance with accepted Soviet forms, with trumped-up competitions, indoctrination sessions, and demands for special efforts in celebration of various Soviet holidays. A Komsomol official reported:

The Komsomol members of the Kirov Detachment addressed themselves to all the Komsomol members of the brigade concerning the activation of the struggle [and] the establishment of Komsomol demolition details [demolitions being somewhat unpopular because of frequent premature explosions resulting from makeshift equipment] consisting 100 per cent of Komsomol members.

The appeal of the Komsomol members of the Kirov Detachment was joyfully received by the Komsomol members of the other detachments.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Nr. 5394/43 geh.," 19 September 1943 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 40252/7, Anlage 30-33).]

All of this served at least the one purpose of keeping the partisans in the routine patterns laid down for Soviet society.

Intensive political indoctrination of its own personnel was a major activity in every partisan unit. This "educational" work was directed by the commissar, who, in the larger units, had at his disposal a sizable staff of battalion, company, and platoon politruks, agitators, and Party or Komsomol members. The scope and methods of indoctrination are illustrated in the following excerpt from the work log of a company politruk:

(a) Explain to the company what partisans and partisan warfare are.

(b) 18 June: 1000-1400 hours, publication of a wall newspaper; editorial conference.

(c) 19 June: 1000 hours, preparation of a discussion in the company on the subject: What does hatred of the enemy mean?

(d) 20 June: Discussion in the company regarding use of common sense and security by partisans. Note: I must give instructions for all operations before departure and must also personally participate in the operations.

(e) 21 June: 1400 hours, preparation of a lecture on the anniversary of the outbreak of the war.

(f) 22 June: 1600 hours, conduct meeting of all company members on the anniversary of outbreak of war.

(g) 23 June: 1600 hours, political information to the soldiers.

(h) 24 June: Publication of a front newspaper (editorial conference),

(i) 25 June: Relate to the soldiers how the Hitlerites bomb the peaceful population,

(j) 26 June: 1800 hours, conference with the members of the editorial staff of the wall newspaper, *The Red Partisan.*

(k) 27 June: Talk with the Communist Party members and candidates (six men) in the company.

(l) 28 June: 1600 hours, preparation for a meeting of Komsomol members,

(m) 29 June: Meeting of Komsomol members and organization of a primary Party organization,

(n) 30 June: 1900 hours, publication of the second issue of the wall paper, *The Red Partisan.*

[707. Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindnachrichten fuer die Truppe Nr. 16," 10 November 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, 707 ID 27797/4).]

The program of indoctrination did not dwell exclusively on the glorification of the Communist Party and the Soviet regime. In fact, after the debacle of the 1941 partisan movement there was a noticeable tendency to play down the Party and the Soviet form of government and to appeal instead to broader national patriotism. The partisans were frequently called "Soldiers of the Red Army in the Rear of the Enemy." The partisan oath, for instance, contained no references to Stalin or communism and began instead with the formulation, "I [name], a citizen of the USSR, true son of the heroic Russian [Ukrainian, etc.] people swear. . ." [See Appendix, Document 3.] A German intelligence report of July 1942 stated, "The politruks give lectures on the meaning of partisan warfare. They emphasize the idea of a national war of liberation of the Russian people."

[707. Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindnachrichten fuer die Truppe Nr. 1," 23 July 1942 (GMDS, 707 ID 27797/3 Anlage 100).]

On the whole, however, the appeals to nationalism and the soft-pedaling of the standard themes of loyalty to Stalin and the Soviet system were directed more at the civilians on occupied territory than at the partisans themselves. Within the units the function of indoctrination was exercised exclusively by dependable Party men, and the lip service given to some of the unorthodox propaganda themes approved by the regime for reasons of expediency counted for less than the propagation in the partisan detachments of the standard attitudes and behavior patterns fostered by the Soviet system.

The force of political authority and the techniques of indoctrination were brought to bear on all individual and group activities within the detachments. Discipline, care of weapons, and individual and group accomplishments all fell within the province of the commissar. He

concerned himself in particular with the new men, the draftees, and the unreliable elements. As a part of his "educative" work he instituted measures against desertion, weeded out the cowards, "instigators of panic," and other undesirables, and accompanied details on combat missions, where it was frequently claimed, the partisans often fought desperately out of fear of the commissars. The commissar controlled the source of news and general information of the detachment. He worked constantly to counteract German propaganda, stressing especially the brutal German treatment of prisoners and deserters. The rank-and-file partisans were isolated as far as possible from outside contacts. This process was greatly facilitated by the blatant hypocrisy of German propaganda and by the inflexible ruthless-ness which the Germans displayed in their approach to antipartisan warfare. Partisan counterpropagandists never had to create baseless fears, but instead needed only to heighten those already inspired by the Germans themselves. A partisan commander captured early in 1943 said, "At present the situation is this: we in the forest believe that communism (which 70-80 per cent of us hate) will at least let us live, but the Germans, with their National Socialism, will either shoot us or starve us to death."

[Amt Ausland Abwehr/Befehlsstab Walli/Abw. III, "Auswertung von Angaben sowjetischer Agenten und Kriegsgefangenen," 23 February 1943 (GMDS, OKW 639).]

The political officers had at their disposal the Party and Komsomol contingents of their detachments. For the rank-and-file partisan, Party membership was not an unmixed blessing. He enjoyed a slightly superior status and was not quite so subject to surveillance and coercion as the non-Party men; but the demands on him were heavy. He was expected to be an exemplary fighter and, in addition, was required to take an active hand in the supervision and indoctrination of the non-Party elements. Because of the small percentage of Party members in most units, the Party contingent was expected to perform conspicuously. The Komsomols, in turn, were urged to assume the role of partisan shock troops.

Each brigade or independent detachment had its Party organization (Party collective), which included all Party members. The Komsomol members were similarly organized. The Party collective operated under the direction of the political officers. Usually the commissar or one of the politruks was the secretary. He reported separately to the Soviet authorities on the state of Party activity within the unit. Committees were delegated to edit wall newspapers and front newspapers and to prepare propaganda. Agitators and speakers were selected to work among the non-Party personnel. The meetings invariably revolved around the theme of "intensification of the work" or "activation of the struggle," which meant hearing and accepting new demands from the political officers for sharper discipline, greater military accomplishments, special achievements to celebrate holidays, and so on.

One meeting of a Komsomol group, according to a captured protocol, went approximately as follows:

Agenda

(1) Discipline of Komsomol members during fighting and in quarters.

(2) Confirmation of the work plan.

(3) Elections.

(4) Miscellaneous. It was said :

(1) Comrade Filipov spoke on the first item of the agenda. He said, "Discipline among the Komsomol members is far from satisfactory. The main reason for lack of discipline is the use of filthy *[netsenzurnykh]* words; this cursing among Komsomol members results not only in insulting each other but sometimes [is directed against] those who do not belong to the Komsomol.

"The behavior of the majority of the Komsomol members in battle is good, but there are also some (for example, Yegorov) who do not show the necessary courage."

Party Member Solovyov: "The question of discipline concerns the entire partisan unit but especially the Komsomol members. There are Komsomol members with us who should be imprisoned. One can observe cases in which Komsomol members seriously quarrel with each other and incite non-Party members to do the same."

Unit Commander Vasiliyev: "if we want to act like Komsomol members, then we must not only be an example, but we must carry the others along. This is our principal task."

(2) Confirmation of the work plan of the bureau of the Komsomol organization. The plan was accepted as a whole.

(3) Election to the bureau. Rybakov, 3; Bukatin, 15. Bukatin was selected by a majority.— *Appendix, Document 20.*

Under the fourth point of the agenda (miscellaneous) the meeting returned to the topic of discipline, hearing complaints made by the officers against two of the members and voting them public reprimands in addition to the punishments they had already received from the officers. [See below, Sect. HI, D, 3.]

The assembly technique was also applied to the personnel at large. It is illustrated in the captured bimonthly political report of a brigade commissar.

1. [Here are listed names of members who performed acts of heroism or were "models of discipline."]

2. The entire personnel of the unit took the oath as Red Partisans. After taking the oath, the men and officers show even better and closer unity.

3. [Communist] Party and Komsomol organizations were established within the unit (Communist Party members and candidates total five men; there are fourteen Komsomol members). They did great work in the unit and also among the population. Five conferences of Party and Komsomol members took place within the unit, and the following topics were discussed: (a) discipline, (b) care of weapons, (c) condemnation of actions of individual fighters, Communists, and Komsomol members. There were about ten general meetings concerning the questions: (a) discipline within the unit, (b) care of weapons, (c) condemnation of actions of unstable comrades.

4. Orders No. 55 and 130 of the People's Commissariat of Defense were thoroughly gone over with the men and officers and were understood in their entire depth. Molotov's note, the patriotic war of the Soviet people, the morale of the German armed forces, the conduct of Comrade Litvinov at the Conference of the [Great] Powers, the proclamation of the partisans of the Kalinin Front, to which 55 men from our unit added their signatures, [were] also [discussed].— *Appendix, Document 17.*

At other times the meetings discussed (1) "the bandit-like behavior of the former officer Ivanov," (2) "comprehensive discussion of the Order of the Commissariat for National Defense No. 130 and the proclamation of the partisans of the Kalinin Front," (3) "formulation of sentences for the criminals, the former partisans D. I. Piskunov and G. A. Kozlov," and (4) "field inspection of equipment"—all under the supervision of the political officers of the brigade.

Soviet authorities have claimed, both during and after the war, that the partisan movement demonstrated the ability of the Communist Party to rally its own members and the "masses" in defense of the Soviet system at a time of crisis. The evidence does not substantiate such a claim. In 1941, admittedly under adverse circumstances, the Party failed to bring an effective partisan movement into being. The movement as it emerged in the later years must be credited largely to the ability of the Soviet regime to extend its direct authority into the occupied areas, aided by a favorable turn in the war and by German political errors. The Party influence in the movement was only a product of that extension of direct Soviet authority. It was used to keep the movement operating exclusively in the Soviet interest and to forestall the possibility of unorthodox political developments. As a result, the Party, in this connection, must be characterized as an instrument of Soviet control rather than as a motivating force.

C. MORALE IN GENERAL

The details of partisan morale almost defy analysis. The German reports based on interrogations of captured partisans and deserters use the terms "good" and "bad" so indiscriminately that they lose their significance. More important are the reports which, like the following, recognize that low morale did not always impair the operations of the units:

1. The food situation among the bands is poor. . . . There is a complete lack of salt. Morale is low and, during the last days . . . things are hopeless; but, because of fear of the leaders, and also because of punitive measures by the [German] troops, nobody deserts.

[318. Inf.Div., Ic, "Vernehmungsbericht Nr. 4," 22 May 1943, p. 2 (GMDS, 18 PzD 32207/12, Anlage 412).]

2. Communists and members of the troops [Red Army personnel] stand together and have a relatively high combat potential. Morale among peasant boys who were impressed is poor. However, there are hardly any deserters. Often [partisans] commit suicide rather than be taken prisoner.

[Korueck 532, Ic, "Feindlage im Korueck-Gebiet (Stand 26.1.1943)," 30 January 1943, p. 3 (GMDS, Korueck 44404/3).]

3. The enemy unit, although without doubt composed of a large proportion of draftees, fought tenaciously and desperately under pressure from the commissars.

[221. Sich.Div., Ia, "Bericht ueber Unternehmen Osterhase," 2 May 1943, p. 5 (GMDS, 221 ID 36509/13, "Osterhase" Anlage 41).]

4. For the most part, the morale of the partisans is to be described as "not good. . . ." The combat strength does not suffer as a result of the low morale since there is close surveillance. Furthermore, the commanders and commissars are able to develop intensive political propaganda, which is not difficult for them since we can only appeal to the dissident elements with vague promises for the future.

[Okdo. H.Gr.Mitte Ic, "Erfahrungsbericht," 23 June 1943 (GMDS, AOK 16, 44185/70).]

These observations are borne out by the statistics regarding desertions from the partisan units. Table I lists the numbers of partisans who deserted to the Germans in the zone of Third Panzer Army in the period from May 1943 to May 1944. The total number of partisans in the army area was estimated at 27,000. For comparison, the numbers of killed and captured partisans are included. During most months, the number of deserters was very small when compared either with the total number of partisans who operated within the zone of the Third Panzer Army or with the numbers of killed and captured partisans. The statistics from the other armies indicate that the low rate of desertions prevailed throughout the zone of Army Group Center, which embraced the region of most intensive partisan activity. In the months from September 1943 to April 1944, for instance, desertions in the area of Third Panzer Army averaged only five per month.

TABLE 1

Partisans who deserted to the Germans in the zone of Third Panzer Army, May 1943 to May 1944

	1943								1944					
	May	**June**	**July**	**Aug.**	**Sept.**	**Oct.**	**Nov.**	**Dec.**	**Jan.**	**Feb.**	**March**	**April**	**May**	Of t anti
Killed	1,227	658	126	275	166	289	546	762	699	194	342	969	6,667	
Captured	372	271	136	158	144	79	115	97	177	23	43	167	8,133	
Deserted	227	247	121	44*	13	2	6	5†	2	2	3	8	374	

* PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Panzer-Armee," Anlage 3, 4 July 194 Anlage 1, 1 September 1943 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 40252/7).

† *Ibid.,* Anlage 1, 1 December 1943; Anlage 1, 1 January 1944 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 49113/37).

‡ *Ibid.,* Anlage 1, 2 April 1944; Anlage 1, 27 May 1944 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 62587/12).

It is worth noting that in the months from May to August 1943, and again in May 1944, the rate of desertion far exceeded the level of the other months. Both times the immediate cause was a large-scale German antipartisan operation. While the number of killed and captured rose as well, the increase in desertions was disproportionate. This revealed more than the fact that partisans were willing to desert when faced with overwhelming enemy forces. The German reports indicate that most of the desertions occurred after the operations had been concluded, when the brigades were disorganized and individuals found it safe to desert from small, straggler groups. Desertion from a partisan detachment was no simple matter. Individuals were always under close surveillance by military and political officers and NKVD representatives. Poor morale and general dissatisfaction with life in a partisan unit were not sufficient to move men to take the risks of desertion. Generally, a catalyst was required to free the individual or produce a crisis which forced a decision. Therefore, the largest numbers of desertions occurred after extensive antipar- ' tisan operations when the heat of combat had subsided and the bands were sufficiently disorganized for the individual to make his break. In at least one instance the Germans noted another kind of crisis-producing motivation. In June 1943, after Operation "Maigewitter," some of the partisan brigades began to move out of the Vitebsk area to take up new zones of operation south of the Dvina River. At that time large numbers of locally recruited personnel deserted. As long as the bands operated near their native villages the draftees remained as partisans, but they

would not move with the brigades to distant areas. From the deserters of one such partisan unit a German local commandant actually recruited a 150-man antipartisan police force.

[8. Pz.Div., Ic, "Lage im bisherigen Einsatzraum der Brigade Sakmarkin," 9 June 1943 (GMDS, 8 PzD 44131/28).]

German policy was a deterrent rather than an encouragement to desertion. The potential deserter who was prepared to run the risks imposed by the partisans was by no means assured of reasonably good treatment when he reached the Germans. Moreover, German failure to institute a satisfactory economic or political program made the deserter's long-range prospects far from encouraging. Many deserters, probably far more than the number who reported to the German authorities, tried to avoid contact with either side. Even their numbers were limited, however, since they exposed themselves to reprisals from both Germans and partisans.

Partisan morale and desertions cannot be considered in isolation but must be judged in the light of the possible alternatives for the individual. The Second World War placed almost every Soviet citizen on both sides of the front in exceptionally desperate circumstances. Morale in the conventional sense was probably abysmally low most of the time—among the civilian population, in the Red Army, and in the partisan movement. As far as the effects of partisan morale are concerned, one need not look so much at psychological motivations as at the logic of events. For the average partisan, service in the bands was not a matter of choice, but of necessity. After the summer of 1942 it became increasingly clear that those who went over to the Germans were joining the losing side, while service in the partisan movement was prima facie evidence, if not of loyalty to the Soviet Union, at least of noncollaboration. Dissociation from both the partisans and the Germans was no solution. Life in the partisan brigades was hard, but life as a civilian under the German occupation was no easier. In the brigades a man was usually fed; under the Germans he was likely to starve or be deported to Germany for labor service. In the partisan movement he had made his choice; outside he was at the mercy of both the partisans and the Germans.

Given the helplessness of the individual in the face of catastrophic conditions of life, the partisan movement under certain conditions offered him limited material advantages. For the average partisan, life was difficult but not much, if any, more difficult than life as a soldier in the Soviet Army. For the partisans, some of the time at least, both the rations and living accommodations were fairly satisfactory, since the partisans lived by their own requisitioning efforts, which at times were quite successful. Furthermore, the partisans did not, as one might suppose, live in constant danger. For long periods, sometimes remarkably long periods, the bands were relatively secure. The individual was not confronted constantly with the inexorable statistics of losses that weighed upon the front soldier of the Red Army; there was the appearance, at least, of better chances for his survival. The aim of the partisan unit was to avoid rather than seek out pitched battles, and the record shows that the partisans were successful in this endeavor. They were aided by the inability of the enemy to launch a thoroughgoing antipartisan campaign.

This discussion so far may have given the impression that the partisans formed a homogeneous group which reacted uniformly to all stimuli. Such an impression would be misleading. Some sharp internal differentiations must be noted. There was a hard core, not small in absolute numbers, though a relatively small proportion of the total movement, that was distinguished by high rather than low morale. It was composed of Party members and officials, regular army officers and men, some stragglers, and some convinced Soviet patriots. These men were likely to maintain their enthusiasm under the most adverse circumstances. They were important because they formed the leadership contingent; moreover, their attitudes certainly influenced to some extent the thinking of the remaining groups. Without this group, the partisan movement would

probably have collapsed. Nevertheless, the most significant distinction in terms of morale within the partisan movement was between the local, drafted recruits and the Red Army stragglers. With some variations in time and place these two groups made up about 90 per cent of the total partisan strength. Under interrogation concerning partisan attitudes and morale, captured partisans and deserters almost invariably drew sharp distinctions between the two. The following excerpts show how these were expressed:

1. Morale is not very good. Only the Red Army stragglers still go along, while those recruited by force are all waiting for an opportunity to escape *(zuverschwinden).*

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Vernehmung von 2 Ueberlaeufern aus Kamenka," 15 April 1942 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 18).]

2. **The morale of the drafted local inhabitants is bad. . . . The morale of the former Red Army men is good. They expect the return of the Red Army any day.**

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Ueberlaeufer im Jeluya Abschnitt," 23 June 1942 (GMDS 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 54).]

3. The morale of the partisans in Shcherbino is not good. The partisans who come from that area are waiting only for an opportunity to escape. Even the former Red Army men say that as soon as it gets dry [at the end of the spring thaw] they will be smashed. That they do not desert is partly connected with the fact that they do not have a chance to go to their home villages and partly with their fear of being badly treated or shot by the Germans in spite of the [German] propaganda.

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "[Meldung] an Befehlshaber Heeres-Gebiet Mitte," 28 April 1942 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 122).]

The former Red Army men were not much more enthusiastic as partisans than the drafted peasants. But they were, in a sense, volunteers, which gave them the advantage of somewhat higher status in the partisan movement and at the same time made it more dangerous for them to fall into German hands. The Red Army men had no strong ties outside their detachments; the drafted men, on the other hand, often had families and property which were endangered as long as they remained in the detachments. Significantly, the dissatisfaction of the drafted men most often did not lead to thoughts of outright defection, but rather toward a state of indecisive despondency.

Some specific external factors influenced the morale of all partisans. Of these, medical services, food supplies, rewards, and the concentration of partisans in relatively secure areas are discussed at length in other sections of this study. The most important single, sustaining factor in partisan morale was the establishment of close contact with unoccupied Soviet territory by air. The ease, relative safety, and regularity of air contact influenced partisan activity in all its aspects. [See Chap. VI.] On the material side, it made possible an adequate supply of arms, ammunition, and equipment, evacuation of the wounded, some medical supplies, and mail. Psychologically it reduced the feeling of isolation and technological inferiority. The general failure of the Germans to interdict partisan air operations at times actually engendered a sense of superiority. Air ties with the Soviet Union became so close that units hundreds of miles behind the enemy lines felt nearly as secure as if they had been on Soviet territory. Furthermore, with arms and ammunition of the latest Soviet make, the partisans were often armed as well as, if not better than the German troops sent against them.

Partisan morale was further bolstered by the inability of the Germans to commit significant airpower against them. When the Germans were able to use aircraft in operations against the partisans startling effects were sometimes noted. A group of deserters reported, "The partisans are especially afraid of the German Air Force. In case of future raids many of the local inhabitants [among the partisans] would run away and use the opportunity to desert."

[H.Gr.Mitte, Ic/AO, "Partisanenueberlaeufer aus dem Kraftzentrum Cholm-Schtscherbino," 20 April 1942 (GMDS, Korueck 29236/3).]

On another occasion, three collaborators who had been captured by the partisans escaped during a panic caused by a German bombing raid.

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Vernehmungen," 31 March 1942, p. 3 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 7).]

A German soldier who had been held in the jail at Dorogobuzh while the partisans occupied that town reported that the guards locked the jail and ran for cover whenever there was an air raid.

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Aussagen des aus russischer Kriegsgefangenschaftentflohnen Schuetzen August Moj," 27 May 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 62).]

In another instance the effects of a bombing raid were described as follows: "Formerly the staff [of a partisan regiment] was located in Syutsova; since the bombing of 30 March 1942 it is in Solaveka. The air attack caused no losses among the partisans. The houses are also all still standing. Bombs dropped behind the village. Nevertheless, there was a great tumult and an immediate evacuation."

[Sich.Div., Ic, "Ueberlaeferaussegen," 7 April 1942, p. 4 (GMDS 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 8).]

I. Classes of Partisans

As a result of its diverse elements the Soviet partisan movement developed a mass of sharp, internal tensions. The situation thereby produced perhaps can best be understood if it is viewed for a moment from the point of view of the theoretically ideal Soviet partisan type: a patriot, very likely a Party member, who had volunteered for partisan service early in the war and was unreservedly dedicated to the Soviet cause. In his brigade there might be another 100 or so men similarly motivated. In the same brigade, however, there would be 100-200 former Red Army men, stragglers and ex-prisoners of war. Many of them had been the victims of circumstances and made excellent and dedicated partisans; others had surrendered without a fight or had deserted in the face of the enemy. All of them, had they made their way back to regular Soviet forces, would, at best, have been handled as material for the punishment battalions. Another 200 or 300 would be drafted men, not always too bad as fighters, but an unenthusias-tic crew who worried more about what was happening to their cows than about the outcome of the war. Finally, in addition to the stragglers and drafted men, any one of whom might also have at some time or other collaborated with the enemy, there might be another 50 or 100 men tainted with treason—former policemen and mayors under the German occupation, deserters from the German indigenous administration, kolkhoz directors, factory managers, teachers, and others who had worked for the Germans before they realized that they were on the losing side. Neither the Soviet command—though it did adopt an anomalous attitude for the time being—nor the partisan with a demonstrably clear record was prepared to grant these doubtful or tainted groups a blanket absolution. The antecedents of each partisan were remembered, and class attitudes arose within the partisan movement which were clearly defined and, in some of their manifestations, ugly.

The intensity of the class tensions is occasionally reflected in the surviving evidence. In the Grishin Regiment the "old partisans," i.e., those who had joined the unit during the period of its founding (January 1942), considered themselves an elite group and kept aloof from the later recruits.

[VI. A.K. Ic, "Feindnachrichtenblatt." 29 May 1942 (GMDS, VI AK 44653/14).]

In another instance 700 Tatars who deserted from a German unit were assigned in small groups to various brigades so that they could be kept under close watch. A deserter from another unit related that: "The commissars and politruks have their own moonshine vodka and often get drunk. It then sometimes happens that they ask individual men who have been drafted into the partisan movement why they did not join the partisan movement earlier. If they do not find a good answer immediately, they are shot."

[221. Sich. Div., Ic, "Ueberlaeufer aus dem Suedabschnitt," 10 May 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, 221 ID 223639/6, Anlage 37).]

The writer of one partisan diary noted that vodka and tobacco had been delivered by air "for the regular partisans."

[VI. A.K., "Tagebuch des politischen Leiters der Aufklaerer-Kompanie der Partisanen-Abteilung 'Morjak,'" May 1943 (GMDS, VI AK 44653/15).]

The Germans occasionally picked up reports of impending purges within the partisan units, which were expected to be aimed principally against the former police and military collaborators.

[PzAOK 3, Ic, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Pz.AOK," 1 February 1944 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 62587/12).]

The class attitudes are often most clearly delineated in statements written by the partisans themselves. Former military collaborators, for instance, were generally treated with outright contempt. A partisan commander writing after the war stated: "Repentant *polizei* began to come to us, too. We ourselves invited them through leaflets. If they didn't leave the police force, we wrote, we would shoot them down like dogs. When they came to the detachment, they were held under special observation for a long time. The men kept a watchful eye on them."

[Fyodorov, p. 425.]

A unit politruk noted in his diary that: "Eighteen hundred Cossack deserters have reported to the Dyatshkov brigade. One hundred and eighty Cossacks have gone over to the Grishin Regiment, taking along all their equipment. These deserters are not to be trusted. They were untrustworthy as fighters." He goes on to say, "If so much as a strong wind blows out of the East, these miserable traitors get so excited that they do not know what to do."

[VI. A.K., Ic. "Tagebuch ... 'Morjak.' "]

The army stragglers, although they were a recognized mainstay of the movement, also remained under lingering suspicion. Fyodorov, an old-line Communist and volunteer partisan, has this to say about them:

But there were all kinds of men among the escaped prisoners of war. Some had voluntarily surrendered to the Germans. Later, when they had been eaten up by lice in the camps and had become sick and tired of being punched in the jaw, they repented and escaped to join the partisans. Not all of them by any means told us the whole truth. And, of course, very few of them admitted they had surrendered of their own free will.

These men joined the partisans only because there was nothing else for them to do. They didn't want to go back to the Germans but, on the other hand, they didn't fight them any too energetically either.

Some of the formerly encircled men who joined us had been "hubbies" [a reference to the stragglers who tried to lose themselves among the civilian population by settling in the villages and "marrying" local girls]. These were soldiers who for one reason or another had fallen behind the army. . . . Among the "hubbies" there were specimens who would have been glad to sit out the war behind a woman's skirt, but the Hitlerites would either drive them off to work in Germany or else make them join the police. After turning this over in his mind such a guy would come to the conclusion that, after all, joining the partisans was more advantageous.

[Fyodorov, p. 424.]

The drafted peasants formed the most distinct class in the partisan movement. In the detachments they were often regarded as mere ballast. An ex-partisan, interviewed after the war, said:

In our detachment there were three brigades [battalions ?]. The first two were fighting brigades . . . excellent and very aggressive. These were composed of ex-war prisoners. The third brigade was no good at all. [It] was recruited from the local peasantry according to an order from Moscow which instructed us to get all the local peasants and [take] them into partisan detachments before the Germans could recruit them, as they were doing for their labor force in Germany.

[H. S. Dinerstein, "Rand Partisan Interview No. 3," 19 May 1952.]

Captured partisans and deserters, when questioned about the composition or morale of their detachments, invariably spoke of the drafted men as a separate class with uniformly low morale.

It is significant that the majority of the partisans had second-class status in the movement and, more serious still, that many of them knew that the fact that they were partisans would very likely not gain them redemption in the eyes of the Soviet Union but would only postpone the day of reckoning. Despite the personal and group tensions thereby produced there was no serious threat of mutiny or even widespread defection. In the atmosphere of hopelessness which the German and Soviet authorities produced between them, day-to-day survival itself became an objective worth fighting for.

2. Rewards

Superficially, at least, partisan activity was not unrewarding. Almost everybody could remember the days when the partisans of the Civil War era occupied a privileged position in Soviet society. Soviet propaganda tacitly promised similar recognition for World War II partisans. Newspapers, radio, and other media of information and propaganda were unstinting in their praise for the partisans. The partisans became the glamorous heroes of the war.

Soviet officials encouraged the partisans to take an inflated view of then-own importance; units were not relegated to the anonymity of numerical designations but were given distinctive names with patriotic associations, such as, "For the Homeland," "The People's Avengers," "Chapayev," "Stalin," "Suvorov," "Alexander Nevsky," and so on through the list of national heroes. Decorations were awarded freely. Nearly every important brigade commander was a Hero of the Soviet Union. Commanders were instructed to nominate their good fighters for decorations, and medals were flown in to be awarded on the spot. Relatively minor achievements of the partisan units were given wide publicity.

These efforts caused the partisans themselves to think highly of then-own activities. Twenty or more diaries kept by partisans survive in the German records. That so many fell into German hands indicates that keeping a diary became something of a fad in the partisan movement. The diarists were usually motivated by a strong sense of the importance of then-activities. They believed their experiences were worth recording on the spot. The more modest believed they were compiling valuable records for their families; others expressed the intention to publish their reminiscences after the war.

The partisans were encouraged to extol their own achievements and sacrifices in letters to the unoccupied territory, as the following excerpts show:

1. Recently we have engaged in heavy fighting. Both we and the Germans have had losses, but the Germans had the heavier losses. Life is difficult, since everything around us has been burned down; but we do not lose our courage. Part of our people fight the Germans, and the others occupy themselves with farming and work in the forest. We have built a mill where we mill our grain. We have also built an oven in which we bake bread. Naturally, everything is done secretly and with caution. Our forest is surrounded by the Germans, but one needs to live in order to fight. The Stalin Order No. 130 will be fulfilled. Everything he demands of us will be accomplished. We dedicate our lives to the victory.

[Gr. GFP 639 b. Panzerarmeeoberkommando 2, "An dem Panzerarmeeoberkommando 2," 20 July 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 30233/66).]

2. Dear Comrades! [The letter is written to former fellow workers in a factory which was evacuated to Soviet territory.]

Last winter I called on you to enter into competition. We agreed that each was to improve his work in his own sphere of competition. Now, after three months I am ready to settle accounts. What have we done in enemy territory? I won't bore you with details. I will say only that our commitment has been met. My commissar and I have received the Order of the Red Flag. Other partisans have received decorations as well. Now we must improve our methods of fighting the enemy. I call on you, my comrades, for better work. In the future may I hear only good of you.

[Ibid]

Such letters were undoubtedly propagandist; in intent and did not necessarily reflect the personal attitudes of the writers; still, they probably stimulated a conviction among the partisans themselves that their achievements were heroic and would be recognized and remembered.

In the matter of material rewards the attitude of the Soviet authorities was ambiguous, though, on the surface at least, still generous. Technically, membership in a partisan unit was the equivalent of service in the Red Army, with equal rank, pay, and privileges. Brigade commanders were often given the rank of army colonel; otherwise, comparatively few commissions were granted

purely on the basis of service in the partisan movement. The whole question of pay was postponed until after the termination of hostilities. Leaves and rest periods behind the Soviet lines were the partisans' due in theory but were almost never granted.

On the whole, the rewards were intended only to stimulate expectations for the future. For most individuals the final result was a profound disappointment. During the period of the great Soviet advance in 1944, German agents reported that partisan units overtaken by the Red Army, instead of receiving the preferential treatment they expected, were granted short leaves and then thrown into front line units.

[Abwehrkommando 304, Meldekopf Renate, "Abwehrmaessige Ueberpruefung der V-Leute," 24 May 1944 (GMDS, HGr. Nord 75131/31). XX AK/Ic, "Jenseits der HKL," 28 May 1944 (GMDS, XX AK 54486/2).]

Given the intensely suspicious nature of the Soviet regime and the heterogeneous composition of the partisan units, it is likely that even the dedicated partisans, after their return to Soviet territory, counted themselves lucky if they avoided being remanded to an army punishment battalion. Probably only the trusted Party men in command positions benefited materially from partisan service. Those fortunate partisans who managed to survive political screenings and enmity of the regular troops, which followed immediately upon their return to Soviet territory, probably at best managed to bask modestly in the glory of the continued favorable publicity given the partisan movement as a whole in Soviet newspapers, magazines, and published memoirs of the more prominent commanders.

3. Inertia

In contrast to a regular army, a partisan force is not expected to win a war but only to contribute to the victory. The question of what constitutes an adequate contribution is difficult to resolve even in a tightly controlled movement such as that in the Soviet Union. The average partisan does not engage in a single-minded pursuit of a heroic demise, but is rather more inclined toward preoccupation with his personal survival. Finding himself in a service which is by definition dangerous, he engages in a constant effort to reduce his risks. The same is true of the whole partisan movement. As an institution it becomes dedicated to its own preservation—not to its self-destruction. These attitudes are persistent and irresistible. At best, they limit the theoretical military potential of the partisan and, at worst, they reduce the movement to impotence.

The corrosive action of these forces was a major factor in the failure of the 1941 partisan organization. In many of the original partisan detachments the men simply decided that resistance was impossible, and the units dissolved. Those that survived did so by a series of rationalizations which resulted in the setting up of personal and group security as their primary objectives. In his memoirs, written after the war, an oblast Party secretary who had been intimately associated with the 1941 partisan movement describes one partisan unit as "a haven for a group of people who were defending only themselves against the enemy."

[Fyodorov, p. 196.]

"Another band," he writes, "was split into two factions: those who wanted to prepare forever and those who wanted action for the sake of adventure." The commanders, he says, had no definite objectives, but favored a middle course which leaned toward passivity.

[*Ibid.,* p. 176.]

The situations he described were representative of a phenomenon which was almost universal. Those units which survived the first shock of finding themselves in enemy territory and, looking around, discovered that they were probably not in imminent danger of annihilation, began to redefine their objectives in terms more comforting to themselves. In the process they convinced themselves that merely remaining in existence constituted a heroic achievement; and therefore they should lie low and prepare for a big attack on the enemy some time in the vague future, or husband their resources in preparation for the return of the Soviet forces.

In the spring of 1942 the Soviet command intervened to pump new life into the partisan movement by sending in regular officers and cadres and by bringing the partisan detachments under tight control. That process continued until the early summer of 1944. One of the most striking features of the 1942-44 period, however, was the tendency toward concentration of partisan forces. The units grew to strengths of 1,000 to 2,000 men or more. Moreover, they did not range freely throughout the occupied territory; instead, they drew together to form centers of partisan concentration. This process reached its fullest development in Belorussia, where a dozen or more centers appeared, one totaling 15,000 men, in and around Rossono Rayon, north of Polotsk; another totaling 12,000 men, along the Ushach River between Polotsk and Lepel; another in the swamps along the Berezina River between Lepel and Borisov; more, of 8,000, 9,000, and 14,000 men, near Minsk, Senno, and Vitebsk. By 1943 at least three-fourths of the total strength of the partisan movement was concentrated in centers like these.

Such centers were created largely in response to tactical considerations and the dictates of terrain; but it seems worthwhile to consider that they might also have represented a stagnation of the partisan movement resulting from the pervasive individual and group desires for security. Militarily, the large centers were not worth the expenditure of men, effort, and equipment required to create and maintain them. Ostensibly they denied the enemy access to vast stretches of territory; actually most of them grew in areas which had been by-passed by German troops and were never brought under military occupation. The centers served as fixed bases from which small detachments could be dispatched for attacks on the German lines of communication, but the process meant a very low efficiency in the utilization of personnel. Of 10,000 to 15,000 men only about 10 per cent could be used effectively at any one time. Superficially, the centers formed concentrations of strength; but they were islands (a comparison with the Japanese situation in the Pacific may be apt). Lacking mobility, they did not constitute striking forces, nor could one center muster its forces to aid another under attack. Faced with a determined enemy assault, a center could avoid annihilation only by disbanding and permitting its forces to disperse piecemeal.

The greatest single advantage of the centers seems to have been the security they offered the partisans themselves. In swampy or wooded terrain, loosely held by the Germans, partisan units could develop undisturbed. Having reached a strength of 5,000 to 10,000 or more men they became immune to small enemy counteractions, and, since the Germans could rarely spare enough troops for large-scale antipartisan operations, centers could function relatively undisturbed for months, or even years. While it was certainly not the nature of the Soviet regime to permit its partisans to idle away their time in relatively secure strongholds, something of the sort apparently could not be prevented. The centers produced good morale and discipline, although at the expense of miltiary efficiency and effectiveness. This situation is reflected in the following German report on the partisans of the Ushachi center:

Most of the brigades are reinforced with Red Army men and are led by officers of the Red Army. Discipline and battle morale are good. At the same time, the majority of the partisans have not yet been engaged in combat with German units. As a result of the so far undisturbed development of the Ushachi area the morale of both the population and the partisans is good.

[HSSPF Russland Mitte und Weissruthenien, Ic, "Feindlage im Raum Lepel-Ulla-Polozk-Doksohyze," 11 April 1944, p. 2 (GMDS, Waffen SS, Dirlewanger 78028/15).]

The function of the centers as a response to the forces tending towards inertia in the partisan movement is illustrated in the following excerpts from letters to the Soviet hinterland captured near the Rossono center in 1943:

1. Rossono Rayon has become a closed region of the partisan movement; the whole population has risen and taken arms against fascism.

2. Our rayon is completely cleared of Germans and the population lives more quietly and happily with us partisans. On 19 September we celebrated the anniversary of the liberation from the 'Fritzes'; a whole year has passed since they were tramping around in their iron boots in Rossono Rayon.

3. I live passably and remember the times gone by which will certainly not return in the former fashion. You well know how our partisan life is—not as it was earlier. When we came here from the Soviet hinterland, the Germans were everywhere and it was not very pleasant. There were many police and other riffraff who fought side by side with the Germans. The population was also against us. This last year has brought about perceptible changes. Our partisan area has become large. Now you see no Germans in the rayon center. This work had to be carried out under difficult conditions; now, however, it has become easier; the population of the whole area stands behind us.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Pz. Armee im September 1943 (abgeschlossen 30.9.43)," 2 October 1943, Anlage 3 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 40252/7).]

Concerning living conditions, several individuals wrote :

1. In our partisan region the harvest was brought in without damage and without a fight.

2. We live well; food, clothing, and footwear are at hand. One needs no more. We harvest the German grain so that we can well provide bread for ourselves.

3. My life passes quite tolerably at present. Food, footwear, and vodka are at hand in sufficient quantity.

[*Ibid.]*

The claim of having cleared the Rossono region of the enemy is far from accurate; the Germans never had more than token military forces there. If rhetoric is disregarded, the dominant theme which emerges from these letters is one of relief at dwelling in a relatively secure spot. This is coupled with a sense of achievement derived from hving dangerously but not *too* dangerously.

D. DISCIPLINE IN GENERAL

The existing documents indicate that, with the development of large units, the trend in the partisan movement was toward organizational and disciplinary measures closely approximating those of the Soviet Army. In the summer of 1943 a German unit reported:

While Third Panzer Army succeeded in diminishing partisan activity in the zone near the front, the Rossono area had been reinforced to some extent by the erection of fortifications and by

improvements in the partisan organization. In Rossono the appearance of regular Red Army troops with complete military equipment, the existence of a "tight" organization, and the distribution of numerous active Red Army officers throughout the command apparatus indicate that the enemy is trying to build a center of strength in this area which should not be underestimated in its importance to the conduct of operations at the front.

[Okdo. H.Gr.Mitte, la, "Monatliche Meldung ueber Bandenlaee " 4 July 1943 p. 2 (GMDS, HGr. Mitte 65002/22).]

Earlier the same source had reported that the partisans were enhancing their effectiveness by instituting a unified command, importing Red Army officers, and introducing insignia of rank. One captured partisan stated that as early as May 1943 the commander and deputy commander of the brigade in which he had served were wearing Red Army officers' uniforms complete with insignia of rank.

[8. Pz.Div., Ic, "Vernehmung," 18 May 1943 (GMDS, 8 PzDiv 44131/28).]

It appears that the Red Army officers wore their uniforms wherever possible. By 1943 most of the higher officers within the brigades had acquired assimilated army ranks ranging from lieutenant to major general.

The introduction of titles and rank insignia served three purposes: it strengthened the authority of the officers; it gave the officers consciousness of rank, which probably had been lacking in some of the nonprofessionals; and it established reasonably clear lines of command. On the side of discipline, it resulted in the introduction of formal military procedures as far as was feasible under the circumstances. All of this never quite overcame the persistent trend toward informality which developed in the bands themselves. With the brigades operating independently, disciplinary procedures to some extent were always suited to the occasion, and discipline did not become the compelling abstract force that it is in regular military organizations.

Because of the precarious situations in which most of the partisan detachments found themselves, the problems of discipline centered almost exclusively upon the more serious offenses: negligence on guard and in connection with concealment and camouflage, disobedience of orders, cowardice, and desertion. Enough instances of such offenses occurred in every unit to require the constant vigilance of the officers. The politruk of one detachment operating near Bryansk noted this in his diary:

Ryasanyev, the leader of the 1st Platoon, performed very poorly in battle; the leadership rightly deprived him of his command and demoted him to the rank of private. This, however, only after he vowed never to be a coward again. Private Sapozhnikov (Jew): He not only refused to shoot, but even threw away his gun. For this, he was arrested by the detachment commander. Group Leader Mariyev, machine gunner, is a coward. He deserted the scene of battle, leaving his machine gun behind. At this time, he is under arrest.

[707. Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindnachrichten Nr. 14," 26 October 1942, p 2 (GMDS 707 ID 27797/4, Anlage 201).]

Another politruk made the following entry in his diary:

14 April 1943: We made a list of all those who had deserted from our detachment since it was organized [date not known]. Unfortunately, the number of deserters is really

impressive. On the basis of not very accurate records, we estimated a total of sixty-nine desertions. These fools actually took along with them one machine gun, three submachine guns, thirty rifles, and a substantial quantity of ammunition. . . . According to informants, these deserters are already in the German police, and, if the occasion arises, will shoot at us with our own weapons.

[VI. A.K., "Tagebuch des politischen Leiters der Aufklaerer-Kompanie der Partisanen-Abteilung 'Morjak,' " May 1944 (GMDS, VI AK 44653/14).]

The partisan officers had to keep a close watch on most of their men. The regular agencies for surveillance, the commissars and the NKVD special sections, performed the same functions as they did in the Soviet Army. In the partisan detachments, however, surveillance became the keystone of the organization, militarily as well as politically. Accounts similar to the following appear frequently in the documents :

Vetitiyev [a drafted partisan who had deserted] declared that escape from the partisans is difficult, since guardposts are set up everywhere. If a deserter is captured, he is first tortured and then shot. As a result of the "many" desertions, the partisan officers have become so mistrustful of the partisans who are local men that they have scattered the local men in among the former Red Army soldiers. Consequently, the drafted partisans cannot communicate with each other without being observed. Vetitiyev believes that if the number of desertions increases all the partisans who were drafted locally will be shot.

[221. Inf.Div., Ic, "An Befh. d. H. Gr. Mitte," 28 April 1942 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6).]

In April 1943 a unit politruk issued the following order:

As a consequence of the serious food situation there have been some desertions from the detachment. To prevent such occurrences I order (1) all of the men are to be checked for dependability, and a list of undependables is to be submitted to the staff; (2) the guards are to detain all men who appear near the posts without passes, disarm them, and turn them over to the staff; (3) whoever absents himself from the detachment without leave or remains absent after a mission for longer than the permitted time—without a good reason— will be regarded as a deserter.

[VI. A.K., Ic, "Tagebuch .. . 'Morjak.' "]

A German intelligence agency which examined the captured records of the Grishin Regiment listed as the most frequently mentioned offenses: failure to carry out combat assignments, sleeping and smoking on guard, plundering, drunkenness, and "lack of restraint in relations with women." A captured partisan, questioned concerning discipline in his detachment, stated: "Orders were carried out well by some, by others negligently. Those who did not carry out orders satisfactorily were given corporal punishment *[pruegelstraffe]*. Often there were quarrels among the men (e.g., because of tardy relief [while on guard] since there were too few to man the posts). For example, a young, untrained partisan was shot because he fired a round accidentally."

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Vernehmung der in den Kaempfen am 8.4.1942 Gefangenen," 9 April 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 12).]

A captured nurse stated that the men in her brigade were forbidden to associate with the women. On one occasion the commander of the Grishin Regiment issued the following order: "My persistent requests to maintain order and discipline are disregarded again and again. Lack of

restraint in relations with women has been noted at different times. In seven cases this has resulted in pregnancy. These women reduce the combat readiness of their men and are a burden to the regiment in combat." [See Appendix, Document 58.] Drunkenness among both the officers and men is frequently mentioned, but generally the scarcity of alcohol seems to have served to keep that problem under control.

1. Special Disciplinary Measures

The partisan commanders made a constant effort—undoubtedly on orders from the Soviet command—to curb looting and unregulated requisitioning by their men. Because the partisan detachments lived off the land this problem assumed great importance. Regarding themselves as legal, political, and military representatives of the Soviet Union, the partisans claimed a right to requisition supplies from the population and to confiscate the property of collaborators. For psychological reasons, it was desired to mitigate as far as possible the adverse effects that the requisitioning was bound to have on public opinion. This did not mean that the population benefited materially. One brigade, for instance, forbade the requisitioning of bread and ordered that "the collection is to be so organized that the people do it themselves."

[GFP Gr. 714, ["Captured Orders of the First Regiment of the Third Leningrad Partisan Brigade,"] 3 June 1943 (GMDS, 281 ID 45072).]

There were good reasons for restraining individual inclinations toward looting. Each detachment depended to a large extent on the good will of the population in its operating area. Furthermore, with forced requisitioning necessary and officially sanctioned there was a constant danger of the detachments' descending to outright banditry. With a major segment of the partisan personnel motivated by desperation rather than by political or moral objectives, there was the additional danger that the detachments would take the line of least resistance and devote themselves exclusively to bullying the noncombatants.

A partisan officer entered the following comments on this problem in his diary:

Today the detachment was visited by the brigade commander, who conversed for an extended period of time with the enlisted personnel as a fellow-soldier and [spoke] especially about the question of relations with the peaceful population; the reputation which the brigade had in its old combat area must be kept up. This conversation was prompted by the whole series of complaints which have reached the brigade commander about unjust actions of our partisans and illegal confiscation of property.

An order: In the detachment, cases of an unfriendly attitude toward the peaceful population have recently been noted. I order that the strictest measures be taken against the guilty persons upon complaints of the peaceful population concerning unjust actions of the fighters and commanders (abuses, rudeness, threats, use of arms, unlawful confiscation of property belonging to the peaceful population).—*Appendix, Document 74.*

Another brigade issued orders banning looting by individuals and regularizing requisitions from the population:

Recently instances of thefts of cattle, horses, and other goods from the population have been noted. Individual partisans obtain supplies during the night. All these activities, on the part of elements hostile to us, terrorize the population and incite them against the partisans. Such activities are nothing but banditry. Because of this, I order all commanders and commissars of the detachments in my command as follows :

1. The members of the platoons may not collect supplies at night outside of designated villages.

2. If night raids are noted, the persons concerned are to be disarmed and arrested, regardless of their detachments or brigades, and are to be sent to the detachment or brigade staff.

3. Supplies are to be collected during the day only and through the village elders. A receipt must be given for food and cattle received, and a copy of the receipt is to be sent to the detachment.

4. Any partisan caught red-handed stealing cattle, horses, or other goods is to be shot as a looter.

5. The commanders and commissars are responsible for the execution of this order.

6. This order is to be brought to the attention of all personnel in the detachments under my jurisdiction.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Pz. Armee im Dezember 1943 (abgeschlossen: 31.12.43)," 2 January 1944, Anlage 3 (GMDS PzAOK 3, 49113/37 Anlage 43).]

2. Combat Discipline

German reports on antipartisan operations contain frequent references to the "desperate" and "tenacious" resistance offered by the partisans. Nevertheless, disciplinary action against partisans accused of such offenses as willful desertion of a post in combat, abandoning weapons in combat, and failure to carry out orders were common in the partisan units. On the whole, it appears that in small-group engagements, where they were under the close observation and control of their officers, the partisans fought well. Very often, even in such instances, however, their resistance could better be described as desperate than as determined or skillful. In decisive engagements involving a whole brigade or several brigades, the partisans, again, often resisted desperately; but their performance was likely to be uneven, revealing wide variations in the combat effectiveness of the units.

Early in 1942 the establishment of a large partisan center was begun in Ushachi Rayon, south of Polotsk. Free from major German counter-measures it grew, by January 1944, to a strength of 12,000 men or more until it controlled most of the forty-mile stretch of swamps and lakes between Polotsk and Lepel. It was expected to serve as a gigantic roadblock, forcing the enemy to detour to the north and south as the Soviet front advanced westward. Before the Soviet summer offensive of 1944 got underway, however, the Germans launched Operation "Fruehlingsfest," and in about three weeks destroyed the center and most of its brigades. Some of the problems which the commander of the Ushachi center faced are described in the following excerpts from German and partisan documents. After the first assault, a German unit reported: "The behavior of the partisans was uneven. While the partisans of the Lenin Brigade fled from their positions northwest of Ulla as soon as the Germans attacked, our troops observed that the partisans of the Smolensk Regiment in the area south of Fainovo followed their orders to the letter and some even held out in their bunkers to the death."

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Panzer-Armee " 1 April 1944, p. 4 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 62587/12).]

The German estimate was substantiated in orders issued by the partisan commander.

During the battle there were instances of panic. During the retreat, the civilians hiding in the forest were not evacuated even though it was possible to do so. Cattle and food supplies were abandoned. The leadership of the Chapayev Brigade displayed a lack of initiative. The leadership also failed to attempt to master the panic. The Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party Brigade and the Lenin Brigade commanded by Fursov offered no resistance to the first pressure of the enemy. The brigades did not take the necessary defensive measures to prevent the enemy's crossing of the Berezina River and his breakthrough in the forward defense perimeter. In individual instances it was observed that partisans created panic among the civilians in order to rob them of their goods and possessions.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Entwicklung der Bandenlage im Bereich der 3. Panzer-Armee " 28 April 1944, Anlage 62 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 62587/12).]

In another order he stated:

The following shortcomings have become apparent:

1. Insufficient reconnaissance of the enemy territory, with the result that in some cases he surprised us.

2. Lack of determination on the part of commanders and commissars resulting in an unorganized retreat. Insufficient defense in spite of good positions. No action was taken against those who created panic or against cowards.

3. Bunkers are badly constructed and poorly camouflaged.

4. Main line of resistance, including deployment [not properly prepared].

5. Command posts poorly prepared.

6. Lack of precision in giving commands.

[Kampfgr. Gottberg, Ic, "Auswertung von Beutepapieren," 4 March 1944 (GMDS Waffen SS, Dirlewanger 78028/15).]

In the same document he ordered:

Courageous partisans and commanders are to be rewarded and promoted by all available means. Cowards and those who create panics are to be punished in the most severe manner. Commanders failing to prosecute such elements will be punished. Discipline must be improved through the application of the most stringent methods.

Mutual assistance of detachments is to be promoted.

[Ibid]

3. Punishments

The death penalty was the foundation of partisan discipline. Under partisan warfare conditions, which greatly reduced the effectiveness of all less drastic measures, it was not surprising that even relatively minor offenses, such as drunkenness and contraction of venereal diseases, should have been potentially, at least, punishable by death. Usually executions were carried out on the order of the brigade commander, although each officer had the authority to order summary executions at his own discretion. In practice, while the threat of shooting was frequently invoked, executions, except in cases of desertion, were used chiefly to set examples. They were ordered as often as was deemed necessary to achieve the desired purpose—intimidation; there was no determined effort to achieve a uniform standard of justice. In that respect, too, it is likely that the status of the individual went far toward determining his liability to punishment. A drafted peasant, a former collaborator, or a partisan under suspicion for political reasons might stand in constant danger of being singled out and sentenced to death for almost any minor offense, while a partisan who was politically and otherwise in good standing might receive nothing more serious than a reprimand for an aggravated offense.

The better-organized brigades evolved graduated scales of punishment —reprimands, confinement to quarters on short rations, demotions, or expulsion from the Party. A favorite measure against cowardice took the form of a public admission of guilt by the accused followed by his pledge not to repeat the offense. In the light of the heterogeneous composition, tensions, and devious forces at work in every partisan unit, it is not likely that even the sentences formally announced always grew entirely out of the charges stated. The average partisan probably stood in about as much danger of losing his life as a result of the general atmosphere of suspicion which prevailed in most units as he did of being formally cited and sentenced for a specific offense. It was a simple matter to dispose of a man by assigning him to exceptionally dangerous missions. Captured partisans and deserters stated repeatedly that men were often marked for execution without their being informed either of the charges or of the sentence and were simply shot while on patrol or during a minor skirmish with the enemy.

In the execution of punitive disciplinary and political measures the special sections of the NKVD played an important part. The brigades, almost without exception, had an NKVD officer attached to their staffs. In some cases he had a squad of ten to twenty men for such special "administrative" measures as executions of civilians, partisans, and collaborators. The special sections also, apparently, kept track of persons slated for deferred punishment, civilian collaborators, partisans who had collaborated, political unreliables, and Red Army stragglers suspected of dereliction of duty in the 1941 battles. The NKVD officer organized his own agents within the partisan unit and ran an intelligence network which extended throughout the unit's zone of operations; however, the special sections seem not to have achieved the ruthless efficiency of their counterparts in the regular Army. Many of the special section officers were not professionals; moreover, isolation in the brigades probably inspired a certain amount of circumspection in the performance of their work.

Various trial procedures evolved in the partisan movement. Summary executions were common. Generally, however, charges were brought before the brigade commander, who, usually on his own authority but sometimes with the commissar and the chief of staff, issued an order for the execution of the sentence. As far as can be determined, once a charge had been brought, guilt was presumed. The trial procedure involved only an evaluation of the seriousness of the offense and a determination of the severity of the punishment. While the special sections also had the authority to pass and execute sentences, the hand of the NKVD can seldom be detected in the captured partisan records—most likely because the NKVD measures were carried out covertly. Occasionally the Party collective of the detachment was called upon to participate in a trial. Then the charges were brought either by the commander or the commissar, and the participation of the assembly at large was limited to the "formulation" of the sentence.

Among the partisan records captured by the Germans are numerous orders relating to sentences passed against individuals. They illustrate, incidentally, the high degree of bureaucratization which prevailed in the partisan movement. While they represent a certain adherence to formal legal procedure, they are almost always more didactic than judicial in form and content; the charge is stated in general terms and then carefully related to a broad disciplinary problem. The main purpose always is to present an object lesson which reinforces a standing order. The following example is typical:

Order No. 12

To the First Partisan Regiment of the Second Partisan Brigade of the Northwest Front

26 April 1943

Under the conditions of partisan warfare in the enemy rear areas, guard duty is of tremendous importance for the protection of the garrisons against unexpected attacks by the enemy. Still, some partisans do not have the necessary sense of responsibility. Instances of gross contravention of the regulations pertaining to guard duty have been observed.

On 24 April 1943 the partisan of Detachment No. 13, Boikov, while he was charged with the responsible mission of guarding a sector assigned to him, criminally and traitorously neglected his duty by sleeping on guard. Comrade Boikov knew that sleeping on guard is treason and disloyalty to the fatherland.

I order:

1. For criminal behavior while on guard duty and for sleeping while on guard, which is treason against the fatherland, the partisan of Detachment No. 13, Boikov, is to be shot.

2. I warn the personnel of the regiment that in the future I will punish mercilessly all offenses against the regulations pertaining to guard duty.

The order is to be brought to the attention of the personnel.

[GFP Gr. 714, "[Captured Orders of the First Regiment of the Third Leningrad Partisan Brigade]" 3 June 1943 (GMDS, 281 ID 45072).]

Desertion invariably brought the death penalty. In addition the names of close relatives of each partisan were kept on record; if he deserted, his family was exterminated in reprisal. The sentences against captured deserters were given wide publicity in the units.

On the basis of the decision of the Commander of the Special Section attached to the Shabo Regiment, we have executed the Red Army straggler Ivan Yakovlevich Khokhlov (born 1920, not a member of the Party, from the village Lokhovo, Zhnamenka Rayon, Smolensk Oblast).

Facts of the case: The Red Army straggler Khokhlov deserted on 12 March 1942 when the 1st Company was being transferred from Velikopolye to Belyugino and stayed in hiding in the attic of his house at Lokhovo until his arrest on 11 April.

There is no place for deserters in the Red Army! Khokhlov has been shot in front of the assembled detachment. The consequences of desertion have thus been called to the attention of each soldier.

[Signatures]
Commander of the 1st Company Sverev
Commander of the 1st Platoon Belovv
Assistant to the commander of the 2d Platoon Kramskoi
Red Army man Imayev
12 April 1942

[XXXXVI. Pz.K., Ic, "Partisanenherrschaft im Smolensker Gebiet," 18 June 1942, Pp. 3-4 (GMDS, 23 ID 24182/16).]

In keeping with traditional Soviet practice, the individual was not only liable to disciplinary action by his superiors, but was subjected as well to the allegedly spontaneous criticism of his fellows. Every brigade, often every company or platoon, had its own wall newspaper (a typed or handwritten bulletin devoted to news supposedly of immediate interest to the unit). Theoretically a product of the men in the unit, the wall newspaper was actually controlled by the officers. As a major feature it carried comments on the accomplishments and deficiencies of the unit members. The partisan who found himself cited by name in the wall newspaper as a coward or "instigator of panic" might justifiably have become seriously concerned for his future. Similarly, the offenses of partisans were aired publicly at Party and Komsomol meetings. The excerpt below, taken from the protocol of a Komsomol meeting, illustrates the procedure.

The conduct of Komsomol Member Shulga.

Platoon Leader Brylkin: "Although Comrade Shulga is good in battle, he often likes to talk too much. He always has objections, a habit which is incompatible with his conduct as a Komsomol member. I want to cite the following example: I gave the order to bring a saddle. Shulga replied that no one had received a saddle. For this answer he was put in jail for twenty-four hours. For all this, for the remark and for the nonexecution of the order, I propose a reprimand for Comrade Shulga."

Unit Leader: "Every Komsomol member must set an example. He must always support the leader; Shulga, however, does the opposite. I second the motion of the platoon leader."

Decision: Komsomol member Shulga is to be punished with a reprimand to be entered in his record because of his remark and the nonexecution of the order of the platoon leader, which amount to undermining the authority of his superior.—*Appendix, Document 20.*

This procedure made the group accountable for the offenses of its single members, and it increased the vulnerability of the individual by narrowing his sphere of personal freedom from disciplinary interference.

§IV. Conclusion

The manpower of the Soviet partisan movement was drawn predominantly from the peasantry and the Red Army stragglers. In the years 1943 and 1944 these two groups accounted for about 80 per cent of the total strength of the movement. The peasants, for the most part, were drafted into the movement. As partisans they were characterized by a fatalistic indifference. Their immediate interests led them to regard partisan warfare primarily as an additional element contributing to economic disruption and reducing the profits from agriculture. At longer range, they viewed the Soviet and German systems as identical evils, the only difference being that the Soviet Union seemed more likely to win the war. To a minor degree, since the German system offered no compensatory attractions, they were also influenced by a sense of obligation to the

Soviet regime as the legal and indigenous political authority. The Red Army stragglers, on the other hand, were somewhat more positively motivated. The "business as usual" desires of the peasantry meant nothing to the soldiers, and their espousal of the Soviet cause represented a choice of the lesser of two evils. As soldiers they had clear legal obligations to the Soviet state, and as stragglers they were already, in the Soviet view, guilty of desertion. Partisan activity offered them the opportunity to honor their obligations and, possibly, to restore themselves to the good graces of the Soviet regime. German policy enhanced the advantages of partisan activity as far as the stragglers were concerned. Outside the partisan movement they had three choices: to live illegally, subject to arrest at any time and cut off from legitimate employment; to surrender and endure the hardships of the German prison camps; or to add treason to the charges already against them by joining collaborator police and military units. Even though faced with these conditions, the majority of the stragglers dissociated themselves from further active participation in the war as long as possible, joining the partisan movement sometime after early 1942 largely out of fear of retribution aroused by the advance of the Red Army.

After 1941 the percentage of Communist Party members in the partisan movement declined rapidly. In 1941 Party members comprised as much as 80 per cent of individual units, and units averaging between 25 and 40 per cent Party members were not unusual. In the later years the Party contingent rarely accounted for more than 10 per cent of the total strength. This shift was significant because it reflected a basic change in the Soviet concept of partisan warfare—from the idea of a relatively limited, elite movement which would depend heavily on loyal Party members to a mass movement utilizing all available sources of manpower and substituting for political loyalty as the motivating force, the ability of the Soviet regime to extend its authority into the occupied territories. From 1942 on, the Party contingent in the partisan movement was important only as one of the instruments of Soviet control.

The contingents of urban workers, so-called intellectuals, and women were all small percentage-wise but, for various reasons, were important nevertheless. Women (children were also used) were valuable as agents and scouts. Their usefulness, however, was apparently limited, since they were not drafted and there was no attempt to enroll them in the movement in large numbers. The intellectuals—doctors, teachers, administrators of various kinds, and others—were important in the 1941 partisan movement, for which they frequently provided the leadership. Throughout the war, the partisan movement aimed at attracting these people as a means of depriving the enemy of their services, if nothing else. They were a highly unstable element in the population of the occupied territories. Subject to constant Soviet and partisan pressure and often suffering economically from the occupation, many went over to the partisans; or, still worse from the German point of view since their limited numbers could not add significantly to the numerical strength of the movement, they became agents for the partisans. As such, they were often very effective, since they had somewhat superior social status and often, as in the case of doctors and administrators, had access to medicine and other supplies. In the main partisan areas, the urban workers were a minority, under normal conditions (i.e., before the invasion and occupation) less than 25 per cent of the total population. Furthermore, the partisan detachments operated outside the cities. Under those circumstances, the urban population could not furnish recruits to the partisan movement on a wide scale; nevertheless, the Germans reported strong pro-partisan sentiment in the cities. The urban population, in general, tended to accept and support Soviet communism. Such attitudes were, if anything, enhanced by the economic dislocation of the war, which was felt most severely in the cities. Numbers of men and youths left the cities to volunteer for duty with the partisans, and, as the war progressed, underground organizations affiliated with the partisans were created in most of the major cities.

[The Germans discovered at least one such underground group in each of the following: Vitebsk, Minsk, Bryansk, Lepel, Borisov, Bobruisk, and Novozybkov.]

The morale of the partisan movement is difficult to gauge. It is certain that there were very clear-cut class distinctions, resulting from the conditions under which the various component groups came into the movement. The relatively small number of volunteers and Party men formed the only group which could be assumed to have been entirely acceptable to the Soviet regime. Nearly all the others were tainted in some way— the stragglers with desertion, the drafted peasants with general unreliability, the former collaborators with treason. The majority of the men in every detachment were, often not without reason, considered basically unreliable. This situation was reflected in morale, particularly of the drafted men who lived under the constant suspicion of their commanders and who themselves were generally apathetic. Desertion was a persistent problem, although it did not reach catastrophic proportions largely because German and partisan policy and the course of the war combined to make desertion a poor alternative even for the most desperate men.

In the final analysis, it can probably be said that the partisan movement was the product of a Soviet effort to create an active resistance movement by drawing on sources of manpower which, in the main, can be characterized as unresponsive and apathetic, and which, therefore, acted as a constant drag on the effectiveness of the movement. To create such a movement, the Soviet regime instituted close control and strict military and political supervision. It was able to rely to a high degree on the force of its authority to offset the absence of a voluntary response, and it was further aided by the disastrous shortcomings of German policy.

CHAPTER IV Partisan Psychological Warfare and Popular Attitudes

Alexander Dallin, Ralph Mavrogordato, and Wilhelm Moll

§I. Organization and Technical Aspects of Partisan Psychological Warfare

A. ORGANIZATION OF PARTISAN PSYWAR

1. Central Direction

The difficulties involved in the organization and control of partisan psychological warfare at the highest levels were due in part to the general diversity and fluidity of partisan organizational patterns. They were compounded by the specific demands of propaganda work and by the "legitimate" interest that various agencies—Party, Komsomol, Army, NKVD, and Central Staff—had or staked out in these endeavors.

The evidence on the central direction of the propaganda effort is scanty and contradictory. It is clear that, in the early stage of partisan activities, relatively little attention was paid either by Moscow or the partisans themselves to the streamlining and coordination of propaganda efforts. To the partisans, propaganda was something of a luxury at a time when they were not only hard pressed to justify their existence but also when they were often cut off from Soviet news sources and had neither the technical means nor the leisure required to produce printed materials. At this time their efforts were restricted to word-of-mouth appeals and, wherever practicable, to printed media produced on the Soviet side of the front.

[As early as January 1942, however, the Germans noted that, occasionally at least, drop-areas for Soviet leaflets were selected so as to concentrate drops in locations where partisans on the ground could assure their distribution. (Befh. H. Geb. Nord, Ic/AO, "Tätigkeitsbericht fuer die Zeit vom 1. bis 31.1.1942," p. 2, GMDS, HGeb 18320/6.)]

After the creation of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement, on 30 May 1942, [S. Golikov, *Vydayushchiesya pobedy sovetskoi armii v velikoi otechestvennoi voine* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1954)] institutional channels were further developed and through them substantive psychological warfare operations were coordinated on the German side of the front. Evidence of more centralized control is further supplied by (a) the existence of a training school for partisan propagandists in Moscow, presumably operating under the Central Staff; (b) the available text of a broadcast containing directives to be followed in partisan propaganda; and (c) the fact that propaganda materials, including newspapers and leaflets printed in Moscow, were regularly brought in to the partisans for guidance and distribution. Moreover, the themes employed in partisan propaganda showed striking parallels (along with significant differences) when compared with Soviet propaganda.

[Other evidence of a centralized direction of partisan propaganda is implicit in the requests for information on all aspects of life under German occupation, including the German-sponsored press—information which could in turn be put to good use in propaganda material prepared on the Soviet side.]

Toward the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, German reports recorded a more systematic organization of partisan psychological warfare. This development may have been the result of two Stalin orders. The first, dated 5 September 1942, called for the organized distribution of newspapers, leaflets, and other printed materials on occupied territory.

[AOK 9, Ic/AO, "Auszug aus dem Befehl des Volkskommissars der SSSR, Nr. 0189," 19 August 1943, p. 3 (GMDS, H 14/14).]

The text of the second is unfortunately not available, but its existence is confirmed by numerous German reports fixing its date as December 1942. It reportedly called for tighter control and intensification of partisan press and propaganda activities. It specifically provided for the establishment in Moscow of one-month courses for editors, proofreaders, correspondents, and printers, who after graduation were to be assigned to the partisans. Information for inclusion in partisan media was to be sent regularly by radio, and special propaganda and press sections were to be activated at various partisan levels of command.

[OKH/GenStdH/FHO, *Nachrichten ueber den Bandenkrieg,* Nr. 4, 10 September 1943 (GMDS, H 3/738) [hereafter cited as *Nachrichten],* p. 4.]

Many of the above measures had already been implemented well before the order was issued; the remaining ones were complied with in varying degrees.

By mid-1943 the Central Staff and the territorial (Belorussian and Ukrainian) partisan staffs each had a propaganda and press section directing the work of editors, journalists, and technical personnel.

[The Ukrainian Staff's section was reportedly headed by the prominent Ukrainian poet, Sosyura. *(Nachrichten,* Nr. 3, 28 July 1943, Anlagen 6 and 10.) According to a questionable report by a former partisan, in Belorussia "a Central Propaganda Section was established at the Central Committee of the KP(b)B. ... Its staff included a representative of the Political Administration of the Red Army, who acted as a liaison man to the partisan propaganda staff." (Harvard University, Russian Research Center, Project on the Soviet Social System [hereafter cited as Russian Research Center], interview protocol series B 7, #140, p. 86.)]

The Political Administration of the Red Army Fronts and the Political Sections of the Armies were charged with propaganda to the civilian population in the rear of the enemy and with supplying propaganda materials to the partisans. Operative groups on the Soviet side of the lines apparently did not have separate propaganda and press sections.

The precise interrelation of Central Staff Propaganda, Party, and Army psychological warfare sections remains unclear. It may be asserted, however, that coordination did take place at least on the most important issues and themes. A high-ranking partisan officer told the Germans after his capture that the question of how to treat the Vlasov movement in Soviet and partisan propaganda had been discussed jointly with the *agitprop* section of the Party's Central Committee and the Main Political Administration of the Red Army. Likewise, the time lag repeatedly observed before partisan propaganda responded to the most crucial and controversial German measures, notably the German agrarian reform of February 1942, suggests that coordinated directives had to be obtained at the highest levels before psychological warfare operations could begin. At the same time, the organizational structure remained sufficiently flexible to permit the lower echelons at all times to exploit local conditions and specific themes within the general framework and context of approved propaganda lines.

2. The Communist Party in Partisan Propaganda Activities

The point of departure for the integration of the Communist Party and its adjunct Komsomol network into psychological warfare activities in the German-occupied areas of the USSR was the great role played by the Party organs in peacetime "agitation and propaganda." In the initial stages of the war the Party had sought to leave behind an underground apparatus in each city, rayon, and oblast of the occupied areas. [See Chaps. II and III.] Among other things, the underground Party was to be responsible for the creation and control of the partisan movement on a territorial basis. Some measures for the movement's propaganda work were adopted even before the German arrival. An order of the Party's Central Committee of 18 July 1941, for instance, provided for the direction of partisan groups by small underground Party units, specifying that arrangements were to be made to send leaflets and posters to the partisans or to prepare for printing such materials on the spot. In Chernigov Oblast, the underground Party committee, which also constituted the original staff of the partisan movement, institutionalized propaganda activities as early as the end of July 1941, when a Secretary for Agitation and Propaganda was appointed and charged with "selecting literature, setting up a print shop, collecting and packing newsprint." Similar preparations were made in the Crimea, Krasnodar, and Stalingrad regions. In the last two areas the Party secretaries of the rayon and city committees were made responsible for the preparation of propaganda work.

Where bands actually engaged in propaganda activities, the interrelationship of Party and partisan work was so close that any distinction between them would not correspond to the realities of the situation. One German intelligence report, discussing underground Party-directed propaganda in the summer of 1943, found that "systematic construction of an illegal network of Party and partisan propaganda" was taking place "throughout the entire Eastern occupied territories under central direction from Moscow." The outstanding feature was "the close coordination of partisan propaganda with Party propaganda"—a conclusion fully borne out by other available data. Another report stated that special propaganda groups set up by partisan brigades were administered jointly by the partisan staffs and the underground Party committees. In some instances the underground Party committees were actually set up by partisans; in others the Party committee was physically attached to or even identical with the staff of a large stationary brigade. Party secretaries, especially at the rayon level, often were partisan officers at the same time.

The difficulties in distinguishing between Party and partisan-sponsored propaganda activities are compounded by the frequency with which German reports fail to distinguish between Party organizers and partisan groups; they often assumed that the entire partisan movement was under direct, or even exclusive, Party control, and Soviet postwar accounts generally tend to exaggerate the role played by the Party as the "organizer of victory," either by conveniently ignoring the unpopular activities of the NKVD apparatus, or by seeking to inflate the part played by Communist organs, compared with the politically more neutral and less articulate Army. It must be concluded that the role played by Party and Komsomol in partisan psychological warfare was greater than that of any other institution, especially since the work of the Red Army in this field was handled through the Main Political Administration, which at the same time was the Military Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR.

a. Party Control over Partisan Propaganda

Partly because of the chaotic retreat and general disorganization, partly because of the unfavorable conditions in which the small staffs were compelled to operate during the initial stage of the occupation, in many rayons the Party nuclei left behind in effect dissolved and disappeared. The scattered evidence suggests that, during the first phase of the partisan movement, the revival of the Party organization above the local level was crucially handicapped by the same factors that rendered difficult the survival and extension of the partisan movement itself.

In line with general endeavors to intensify anti-German activities and organization behind the lines, the Communist Party in the unoccupied areas began dispatching its representatives back to German-held soil in order to reorganize Party and partisan units and spread propaganda among the population. Such a development took place, for instance, in Leningrad Oblast when the Oblast Committee sent underground Party groups to German-held territory to engage in Party-political work.

[P. Sheverdalkin, ed., *Listovki partizanskoi voiny* v *leningradskoi oblasti 1941-44* (Leningrad: Leningradskoye Gazetno-Zhurnalnoye i Knizhnoye Izdatelstvo, 1945), p.7.]

There is every indication that a similar process took place in other oblasts.

The Party Oblast Committees, for the most part located on the Soviet side of the front, supplied the underground press with the necessary materials, printing equipment and paper, and supervised the publication and distribution of propaganda materials.

[L. Tsanava, *V senarodnaya partizanskaya voina v Belorussii protiv fashistskikh zakhvatchikov* (Minsk: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo BSSR, Vol. I, 1949; Vol. II, 1951X11, 930.]

The Central Committees of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Communist Parties (located on the Soviet side) published their own materials and provided the partisans and the civilian population with copies of their papers, mostly by air.

[A Soviet postwar source credits the Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party and the Belorussian Staff of the Partisan Movement with instituting a regular newspaper supply service. This source alleges that, on the average, the rather impressive number of 350,000 papers was sent in daily, in addition to 30,000 copies of *Sovetskaya Belarus,* the official organ of the Central Committee of the Belorussian CP. Other newspapers included issues of *Pravda, Izvestiya, Komsomohkaya Pravda,* and *Krasnoye Znamya.* Despite the seemingly exaggerated

number, the source admits that material sent in from the Soviet side proved to be insufficient and needed to be supplemented by material printed in the German-held areas (Tsanava, II, 68).]

The Leningrad Oblast Committee played a somewhat unusual role in the partisan control structure, since the *obkom* secretary, Nikitin, also commanded the partisan staffs attached to the Northwest and Volkhov Fronts. When supplies were shipped to the partisans, the propaganda sections of the partisan staffs at the Volkhov and Northwest Fronts sent along considerable quantities of leaflets.

[Sheverdalkin, p. 7. These Party-operated sections should not be confused with the Political Administrations of each Front, which also sent psychological-warfare supplies to the partisans.

In some areas inter-rayon committees were established, covering several or parts of several rayons. These Party committees, generally created where it was not feasible to set up rayon committees, are credited by a Soviet source with having played "a tremendous role in the development of the partisan press" in Leningrad Oblast.]

The material at hand permits few generalizations about the changes in Party direction of partisan propaganda. Only in the spring of 1943 did the Germans find a set of directives ostensibly issued by the Central Committee of the VKP(b) with a "Work Plan" for Party organs behind the German lines. The excerpts given in the available document fail to indicate that the plan was aimed specifically at the partisans, though in all probability it was. Among the various points, the directives stressed: "The Party member is obliged... to explain the war situation on the anti-Fascist fronts of the war to the non-Party masses and to restore and strengthen among them the belief in the final victory of Soviet power over fascism." The extensive point-by-point program attached to them included drafting civilians for work with the underground, increasing inducements to collaborators to desert, infiltrating German and indigenous collaborator agencies, and preventing German requisitions and recruitment of forced labor.

Certainly the *obkomy* remained the key bodies in the formulation and transmission of propaganda policies to the partisan units, subject to broader directives at a higher level. The rayon committees of the Party were at first constrained to operate independently and without extensive underground means; more often than not, the German occupation had deprived them of cadres, means of supply, and for some time of liaison with higher echelons. As the Party committees were revived on a territorial basis behind the German lines, each *obkom* and *raikom* was instructed to publish its own newspaper and leaflets. While the themes employed show enough general similarities to suggest rather specific directives from above, often rayon workers had to fend for themselves both in amassing technical equipment and in drafting specific appeals adapted to local conditions. By 1944, in most areas behind the German lines, each *raikom* was publishing newspapers and leaflets, though many of these were technically inferior, small in circulation, and irregular in appearance and distribution. [See also below, subsection B, 2.]

While many such Party committees were, in operation, at least formally separate from partisan groups, a corresponding Party network permeated the partisan structure itself. [For further details, see Chap. II, Sect. III, H, 3.] As the partisan movement grew and its institutional framework expanded, so did the Party organizations and the Propaganda and Agitation Sections within them. While the major task of such sections was customarily indoctrination within the unit, at least in some instances the Party cell also functioned as a nucleus for the reinstallation of the Party apparatus among the civilian population as well. In some cases, the Party units within the partisan bands were closely tied in with the territorial Party organizations for the area in which they operated [This was particularly true in instances where the underground Party was also the organizer of the partisans and where Party secretaries were simultaneously partisan

officers. In Kalinin Oblast, 48 *raikom* secretaries; in Smolensk Oblast, 85 *raikom* secretaries worked as organizers of partisans units. In Belorussia [at the peak] 9 *obkomy,* 174 *gorkomy* [city committees] and *raikomy* were operating under the Germans. (Golikov, p. 100.)]; in others, they were directly responsible to higher Party echelons on the Soviet side of the front.

[This procedure paralleled the Red Army policy of keeping the Party and Komsomol organs within the military establishment exempt from the territorial network of the Party and making them directly responsible to the Central Committee of the VKP(b) through the Main Political Administration of The Red Army. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Party Control in the Soviet Army," *Journal of Politics* (Gainesville, Florida), November 1952.]

In addition to conducting political propaganda among the population, they were responsible for the collection of political intelligence.

As the partisan movement expanded, there was a growing tendency to transfer partisans who were Party members from combat and administrative duties to political and propaganda work, either within the Party cell or at the propaganda section of the partisan unit. In one way or another, the Party continued to play a decisive role in the psychological warfare work of the detachments. It provided special propaganda troops and individual lecturers and agitators, who were filtered through the lines or flown into the occupied areas, and who occasionally brought propaganda directives and printed material with them for distribution behind the German lines. In other cases, high-ranking officers were temporarily sent in by the Party to give advice to partisan units and at the same time to deliver lectures and reports to partisans and neighboring civilians.

b. The Underground Komosomol in Psychological Warfare

As an adjunct of the Party, the Komsomol possessed an equally extensive network throughout the Soviet Union. With the advent of the German occupation, its apparatus on occupied soil also disintegrated, although its membership did not fully disperse. Though gravely weakened by mobilizations and evacuations, a probably larger percentage of Komsomol cadres than of their Party counterparts remained on occupied soil. It is likely that defeatism was less widespread among the Soviet-trained younger men and women than among skeptical older persons aware of alternatives to the Soviet regime and hardened by a generation of life in the USSR. It was thus an obvious measure for the Soviet regime to attempt a revival of the Komsomol apparatus, which was particularly well suited for employment in psychological warfare: Komsomol members were likely to be more literate, physically more hard and resilient, and at the same time more reliable from the Soviet point of view.

The revival of a Komsomol organization is described in various Soviet memoirs and postwar belles-lettres. The Chernigov and Krasnodar "Young Guards" are of particular interest since they operated in conjunction with partisan units.

[See also the Stalin Prize-winning novel by Konstantin Fadeyev, *Molodaya Gvardiya* [Young Guard].]

Led by a "political education inspector," the Kholmy Young Guard gradually became a substantial center of propaganda work. According to a Soviet account, "they printed leaflets containing the Soviet Information Bureau bulletins [a general practice of virtually all propaganda units] and news of district life with the regularity of a newspaper and faithfully delivered them to specific addresses. There, more copies were made by hand and passed on. In the course of [a few months] they had printed and distributed thousands of such leaflets."

[A. Fyodorov, *Podpolnyi obkom deistvuyet* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Mini-sterstva Vooruzhennykh Sil Soyuza SSR, 1947), pp. 373-74]

Other Komsomol groups engaged in propaganda activities in Minsk and Baranoviche Ob-lasts; they published their own newspapers and leaflets. Komsomol members also formed the nucleus of an *agitkollektiv,* whose main work consisted in the distribution of printed material under Party supervision.

[See also Tsanava I, 217-18; II, 912, 921.]

In general, as a Soviet pamphlet stated frankly early in the war, the Komsomol was enrolled to win over the fence-sitters, especially the youth, in occupied territory. It was felt that such people frequently "needed merely a push, and it was this push that the Komsomol partisans were to provide."

[N. Mikhailov, *Komsomoltsy v tylu u vraga* (Moscow, 1942).]

Though the degree to which Komsomol units were revitalized varied greatly (in rural areas, generally in direct proportion to the prevalence of partisans), the oblast and rayon Komosomol committees were restored to a considerable extent and played a notable role in the field of propaganda.

[Tsanava (II, 64 ff.) claims that over 2,500 Komsomol agitators operated in Minsk Oblast in 1943. Regular meetings of underground Komsomol agitators allegedly were held in Minsk in October 1942 and February 1943.]

c. Propaganda Organization within the Partisan Movement.

During the early stage of the partisan movement, the propaganda apparatus was both primitive and haphazard. In some units which had no facilities to print propaganda material—and in 1941 this included most of the bands—the commissar would dictate prepared texts of leaflets to a few partisans who would copy them; in smaller units the politruk assumed responsibility for drafting leaflets, and the commissar remained in over-all charge of political affairs.

In 1942-43, in accordance with orders from higher headquarters referred to above, separate Propaganda and Agitation Sections were established in operative groups, brigades, and independent otryads on the German side of the front. The institutionalization of psychological warfare efforts reflected the increased strength of the units, more time, and additional technical equipment and personnel for propaganda work.

[Fyodorov, a leading partisan commander, claims that the size of partisan units was determined in part so as to enable them to engage in propaganda and political activities (Fyodorov, p. 355).]

Separate Propaganda and Agitation Sections were reported in operative centers in Belorussia, in Mogilev and Bryansk Oblasts. One Belorussian operative center apparently had such a section as early as May 1942; it was allegedly headed by a former political commissar of the Red Army with an assimilated rank of major general.

Such sections were also formed on the operative group and brigade level from the spring of 1942 on.

[According to a German intelligence summary, the standard table of organization for a brigade included a political and propaganda section, consisting of a commissar and thirty-five to seventy men *(Nachrichten,* Nr. 1, 3 May 1943, p. 8).]

Though this effort clearly accorded with the general streamlining of the partisan structure, some brigades established them much later; or they never had such sections. The Grishin Regiment, one of a handful of important "roving bands," created a section for propaganda and agitation in July 1943. The order setting up this section sheds some light on the tasks which it was expected to perform:

A Section for Agitation and Propaganda is to be created in order to increase agitation and propaganda activities in the regiment and among the civilian population. A section chief, two instructors, and an editor for the newspaper will be appointed. The assignments of the section for August are the following:

1. Increase of agitation in the regiment.

2. Discussions with officers and men in which the international situation, the situation at the front, and the tasks of the Red Army and the partisans in the struggle against the enemy, as well as the relations with the civilian population are to be explained.

3. Publication of leaflets for the civilian population.

4. Publication of the newspaper, *Death to Our Enemies* (one issue every five days).

5. Recreation activities for the troops.

At the same time intensive propaganda directed at the enemy is to be carried on. This type of propaganda has had considerable success among the indigenous units during the last few months.—*Appendix, Document 61*

A few days after the activation of this section, leaflets specifically requested for work among the indigenous units were distributed among two companies of collaborator troops.

By 1943 another roving band, under Sidor Kovpak, also had its separate propaganda section, which distributed printed matter among the population.

[HSSPF Ost, "Bericht ueber die Bekaempfung der Kolpak-Bande ...," August 1943, p. 4 (GMDS, EAP 170a-10/5).]

In addition to publishing leaflets and newspapers, the partisans also engaged in considerable oral agitation among the civilian population. Generally such activities were carried out by the partisan propagandists who manned the *agitprop* sections. In some units, however, special agitation otryads were set up, consisting of artists, musicians, and singers, as well as experienced agitators. One such unit, during six months of its life in Vileika Oblast in 1943, performed sixty-five times before civilian audiences and fifty-five times among the partisans. A seventy-man agitator collective was reportedly organized by the First Bobruisk Partisan Brigade; it engaged primarily in lecturing among the rural population. Such activities were exceptional and were apparently organized by particularly zealous Party or partisan leaders.

3. The Red Army in Partisan Psychological Warfare

The obvious interest shown by the Red Army in the psychological warfare efforts of the partisans can be documented first for the period in August 1941 when the Political Administration of the various army groups intervened directly in the organization of partisan detachments. In a "Program for the Training of Commissars and Political Officers" of the Red Army, Lev Mekhlis, chief of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army, stated that:

Commissars and political officers are obligated to contribute with all available means to the furtherance of the partisan movement in the enemy's rear, to maintain relations with the partisans and to direct them. Special attention is to be paid to printed propaganda among the population of the occupied territories, especially to the exposing of Fascist lies and misinformation. The population of the occupied areas is systematically to be supplied with Soviet newspapers and special leaflets.

[AOK 16, Ic, "Auszugsweise Uebersetzung: 'Program fuer die Schulung der Kommissare und Politarbeiter,' " 27 October 1941 (GMDS, DW 65).]

It was along these lines that Army support to partisan psychological warfare was actually given; in addition, the Army dropped by air substantial quantities of printed material directly among the civilian population behind the German lines. The key organ in this effort was the Main Political Administration of the Red Army (GPUKA) and its Political Administrations of the several Fronts.

[Each of these had a special section for propaganda addressed to the enemy and to the civilian population in the enemy rear area. German sources reported in the later part of the war that the Soviet Army was dispatching special propaganda teams behind the German lines. These were not identical with the groups of Party propagandists assigned to the partisans. However, according to a former partisan interviewed after the war, these special groups were dispatched primarily for subversion and intelligence work and had "very little interest in propaganda." (Russian Research Center, B 7, #140.)]

For the purposes of this study, it will be sufficient to mention some practical aspects of Army propaganda material produced for use and dissemination by the partisans. Though the Red Army, through the GPUKA, presumably received the same over-all directives about themes and slogans as the Party and partisan units did through their staffs on the Soviet side, the former produced leaflets without any apparent reference to or coordination with media issued by the latter.

[Among the material produced by the Army for the occupied areas, one may distinguish: (a) material of the Main Political Administration, including reprints of news-

paper editorials, the daily series of *News from the Soviet Fatherland,* and other leaflets; (b) material printed at the Front level, including various leaflets without spe-cial markings but identifiable by signature, such as "Political Administration of the West Front"; (c) material produced for the Army at other printing shops, e.g., the Lithographic Plant, and Gosplan publishing house in Moscow.]

The actual influence of the Red Army in partisan propaganda was probably greater than the available evidence indicates. A postwar source claims that, in general, the control which the GPUKA exercised over the wartime press increased considerably. It also asserts that, in early 1942, when the Red Army was playing a major role in revitalizing the partisan movement, the Main Political Administration dispatched propagandists to the German-held areas to work with the partisans; such assignments were presumably independent of parallel Party efforts.

[Arkady Gayev, "Sovetskaya pechat na voine," *Vestnik instituta po izucheniyu istorii i kultury SSSR* (Munich), No. 8 (1954).]

Moreover, the controlling partisan staffs attached to Red Army Fronts, armies, and even divisions received all logistical support through Army channels. Such support included considerable quantities of printed material. The Army also presumably had a major voice in the treatment of military collaborators— a subject which, as is shown below, was of considerable importance in partisan psychological warfare.

In 1941, when the partisans were left to operate largely on their own initiative, the Army sought to intervene in partisan propaganda, perhaps contrary to the original conception. The role of the military in psychological warfare can be assumed to have increased, at least temporarily, after the failure of the initial territorial partisan organizations. Various aspects of partisan work, ranging from recruiting men for the Red Army to coordinating demolition activities with the Red Army and using material disseminated by the Army Political Administrations, required close coordination between military and partisan staffs.

The apparent conflict of interest created by the participation of both the Army and the civilian Party apparatus in partisan psychological warfare becomes less significant if one remembers that the Main Political Administration of the Red Army, though distinct from the territorial Party organization, was also an organ of the VKP(b). Because of its long experience in political propaganda, the Party naturally was anxious to supervise all efforts in the psychological warfare field, yet its extreme concern also reveals the high importance attached to all such efforts by the Soviet leadership.

B. TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PARTISAN PRINTED PROPAGANDA

1. 1941

Preparations made before the arrival of the Germans were inadequate for most partisan units, though by 1942 they were equipped for the publication of printed materials. The speed of the German advance, disorganization during the Soviet retreat, in some instances lack of planning and foresight, and above all, the fact that many partisan detachments which emerged were not the product of specific Soviet planning before the occupation, all contributed to the paucity and in most cases absence of printing facilities.

This fact, as well as the difficult straits in which the inchoate partisan movement found itself during its first months of existence, contributed to the drastic restriction of printing activities. In general, partisan psychological warfare at that time consisted principally of word-of-mouth exhortations and rumors; Soviet-side propaganda to the population on occupied soil, restricted as it was, was quantitatively and qualitatively far more significant than that of the partisans. Moreover, the partisans were handicapped in the selection of themes that were both permissible in terms of Soviet myths and slogans and effective in persuading the indigenous population. Acting as small bodies, isolated from most of the people and from the Soviet command, the partisans concentrated much of their verbal propaganda on their *own* members rather than on neutral or hostile civilians.

If such was the over-all picture, there were nonetheless significant exceptions even during the early months of the occupation. Admitting that in 1941 most partisan groups had no printing facilities, Soviet sources reproduced the text of miscellaneous appeals put out by partisans in small numbers of handwritten copies—the prevalent medium during this first stage. The first "newspapers" were issued in this fashion as one-page handwritten sheets in perhaps eight or ten

copies. Crude both in appearance and content and usually limited to a few simple slogans and exhortations to steadfastness, they were surreptitiously left in neighboring villages or with friendly individuals. Their effective range was exceedingly limited.

[Tsanava, I, 222-23, II, 924; M. Abramov, ed., *Bolshevistskiye gazety* v *tylu vraga* (Leningrad: Leningradskoye Gazelno-Zhurnalnoye Izdatelstvo, 1946), p. 5; Shever-dalkin, p. 4.]

Yet they served the purpose of making the existence and, at least nominal, resistance of the partisans known to a few outsiders, and gave the partisans themselves the illusion of being engaged in essential, dangerous, patriotic work.

A few units possessed typewriters, often decrepit, on which leaflets were also reproduced. How propaganda work was then conducted is described in two Soviet sources:

Polygraphic means [a partisan propaganda officer wrote] were quite limited. We had one typewriter. I had learned to type, and I had to spend whole nights at the typewriter copying the dispatches of the Soviet Information Bureau [received by radio]. We wrote leaflets by hand. We had very little paper; we wrote on cardboard, on thin wooden boards, on glass, and we typed even on cloth and birch rind *[sic].* In the morning our boys would distribute the leaflets in the villages, railroad stations, and even in Bryansk.

[V. Andreyev, *Narodnaya voina (zapiski partizana)* (Moscow, Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1952), p. 212. See also Tsanava, II, 924.]

Though perhaps overdramatized, another account reports in a similar vein: "Usually in breaks between combat operations the otryad commissar would gather five to ten partisans who had a good hand, and would dictate to them the prepared text of a leaflet. In this manner the text would be reproduced in the desired number of copies."

[Tsanava, I, 223.]

Only rarely was more satisfactory equipment available. A few units had brought along a "shapirograph," a Soviet model of a rudimentary hectograph machine capable of producing a few dozen copies of a prepared text. Where it was available, it served as the "printing press"; even as late as December 1942 the publication of partisan "newspapers" was begun on such machines. More exceptional was the availability of a regular printing press. Here and there a rayon committee's staff had disassembled a small press and taken parts of it with them into the woods or had hidden them with local residents. Where the partisans were particularly adventurous and possessed the requisite contacts, equipment was stolen from German-controlled printing shops. In the city of Minsk, the Communist underground workers (exposed and executed by the Germans early in 1942) used type stolen from the German operated "Proryv" printing presses. The "Iskra" detachment filched type and some equipment from an abandoned Soviet printing shop in Lida (in northwestern Belorussia). Later it found in the woods type from a Red Army divisional printing press abandoned during one of the encirclements early in the war and hidden by stragglers. In the same manner, the first *tipografiya* of the Fyo-dorov unit was established with type stolen from the German-held district center.

The primitive nature of the material thus produced, as well as the loyal unanimity of partisan *agitprop* officers, is mirrored in the fact that the most frequent single texts employed were Stalin's famous wartime speech of 3 July 1941 and, later, his address of 7 November 1941. Both German and Soviet materials confirm that copies were surreptitiously circulated to demonstrate to the unbelieving peasants that "Soviet power" and "Party and Government" were still in

existence and fighting. Some versions were copied by the partisans from issues of *Pravda* dropped by Soviet planes; others were produced from newspapers obtained before the occupation; still others were copies of copies, with all the errors in spelling and at times in contents that this process entailed.

However devoted the efforts of a few determined men, in 1941 the technical appearance, frequency of issue, distribution, and effectiveness of partisan printed media were negligible.

2. Equipment

As the war continued, the partisans' printing equipment improved. Though handwritten appeals and leaflets reproduced by shapirograph and typewriter continued to appear, regular printed materials increased in number and importance.

There were three major types of presses employed by the partisans. The first was the improvised press, which might consist of parts stolen, found, or dropped from the Soviet side. At times, it required considerable resourcefulness to get such a press into working condition. After hiding one press during a German attack, a partisan unit near Polisto Lake found that all the parts could not be reassembled, and ink had to be applied with a shoe brush for lack of other tools. One of the Leningrad brigades attached a hammer to its press when the crank handle broke off. From 1942 on the situation improved; as in other forms of partisan activity, the decisive help came from the Soviet side. With the increased membership in partisan units, the establishment of radio and air contact with the Red Army command or higher partisan headquarters, and the general formalization of partisan institutions and controls, greater importance was attached to propaganda work. The inadequacy of equipment was amply apparent and was promptly reported to higher staffs. By mid-1942 Soviet industry had started producing a special portable printing press for partisan use. This so-called "Liliput" press, weighing between sixteen and twenty kilograms, had a supply of type sufficient to set one-sixteenth of the Soviet printer's *list* (i.e., one small sheet up to 20 by 30 centimeters in size) and a press of equal dimensions; the whole set could be strapped to a partisan's back and carried along.

[Abramov, p. 7. A detailed description is contained in *Nachrichten,* Nr. 4, 10 September 1943, pp. 5, 11-14.]

In time, thanks to the number of sets flown in by the Soviet Air Force or transported across the lines, the Liliput became the standard model in most units. Another type of press, in existence in the Red Army at the outbreak of war and known by the name of "Boston," also made its appearance. Much heavier in weight, it was also more sturdy, produced more copies, and printed leaflets and newspapers of larger size (up to 30 by 40 centimeters).

[Andreyev, p. 56. According to Abramov, the 2d Leningrad Brigade started printing its paper, *Narodnyi Mstitel* [People's Avenger], in February 1942 on a Boston press after a few cases of type had been dropped from the Soviet side. While the Liliput printed about 250-500 copies, the Boston could easily produce 2,500 copies.]

In some cases, larger partisan brigades were apparently supplied with Bostons through the Soviet Air Force, which in general was instrumental in enabling the partisans to engage in larger-scale printing.

[According to the official Soviet version, Stalin in "his immeasurable love for the population on occupied soil, thirsting as it was for reliable news," ordered the production and delivery of printing sets in considerable numbers. (Tsanava, II, 925.)]

In theory, at least, every partisan brigade was to have at least one Liliput press; so was each underground Party *raikom* (often identical with the press of a brigade). Party *obkomy* and some of the larger partisan complexes were to have Bostons. By late 1943 most of the regular partisan brigades had at least a Liliput at their disposal. Indeed, the Germans concluded, probably correctly, that from about August 1943 on, propaganda conducted by partisans gained in importance as compared with printed materials disseminated from the Soviet side of the front. Likewise, many partisan units and Party underground committees, especially on the rayon level, began systematically to publish their own papers only in the late summer or fall of 1943. Even then, however, many appeared irregularly.

At the same time, the output from the Soviet side, apparently produced for the most part at the Front level, continued to be of primary importance. The newspapers of the Orel *obkom, Partizanskaya Pravda,* and of the Smolensk *obkom, Rabochii Put,* were both technically superior to most partisan papers, contained considerable information on life behind the Soviet lines and on international affairs, and used illustrations and various mats and fonts. The imprint (on the Orel paper, NA 031) suggests strongly that the copies were produced at a Soviet-side printing plant. Even more important in quantity were the leaflets dropped by Soviet planes on occupied soil; the absence of statistical data makes quantitative evaluation impossible.

Special mention should be made of the comparatively strong multiplication and scattering of publishing units.

[The actual spread of partisan printing facilities, as well as the occasional clandestine use of urban printing plants nominally under German control, must not be confused with the device employed by the partisans in listing, as places of publication, locations thoroughly held by the Germans. Thus one partisan leaflet, for instance, appeared with the imprint of a Novozybkov printing shop, while it was actually produced on a portable press in the woods nearby. Other leaflets made use of Slynka and Klimov in similar fashion, just as newspapers produced on the Soviet side of the front and dropped on occupied soil at times carried the names of German-held towns as places of origin.]

The resulting disadvantages of small circulation and inferior quality, often also of poor liaison with Soviet-side propaganda units and difficulty of control, were at least partially offset by three advantages:

1. Proximity to the target, resulting in less waste of printed media through their being lost or remaining unread; at the same time, greater ease of distribution because of familiarity with local conditions and personnel, and a better chance of overcoming German restrictions on movement.

2. A more equitable distribution of the technical burden among various units; also great self-glorification for the editors in being spokesmen for the Soviet authorities.

3. Most important, an adaptation of contents to local conditions. This latter point is repeatedly stressed in German and Soviet accounts. While some of its aspects will be treated below [e.g. Sect. IV, A, 1, a, and Sect. V, A, B], it deserves stress at this point because it was a recognized reason for the widespread scattering of partisan propaganda centers. "The editors of the underground papers organized their work," an official Soviet account asserts, not without reason, "so as to take into account local conditions."

[Tsanava, II, 80.]

The Germans, on the other hand, were constrained to admit that the rigid central direction of their own psychological warfare occasioned a perpetual lag in the utilization of current events and new themes, something the partisans could successfully overcome while still complying with broad Soviet propaganda directives.

[OKH/GenStdH/FHO (lib/Prop), "Prop.-Unterlagen, Truppenmeldungen vom l.-31.12.43, IV 'Propaganda in die Zivilbevoelkerung," n.d., p. 5 (GMDS H 3/474)]

As a result, German atrocities were promptly reported; partisan propaganda gained in effectiveness by giving local names and places, by appealing to specific individuals to help prevent food and cattle deliveries to the Germans, and by eulogizing the accomplishments of individuals known to local residents.

3. Supply Difficulties

The partisans had frequent difficulties in obtaining essential printing supplies. The typical editor during the period before the delivery of Liliputs by the Soviets "would have a bag full of type, sometimes collected letter by letter, and a primitive printing press." According to a Soviet admission, "to issue a paper or leaflet, the editor had to adjust his notes and articles to the number of letters he had on hand, and to write so that there would be enough a's and o's to last through the article."

[Sheverdalkin, p. 8.]

Another editor stated that he had to set one column at a time and then break up the type for the next column. Printing took place, in this instance, in a small hut.

[Andreyev, p. 331.]

In other instances, special mud-huts or bunkers were built to accommodate the press. During German attacks, the printing equipment, if it could not be easily carried along, would be concealed in holes dug in the ground or in the swamps.

Printer's ink was in short supply much of the time. Some quantities were flown in from the Soviet side; others were stolen from German-managed plants. In the winter, ink had to be heated before it could be used. But the greatest problem was the paper shortage. All partisans were ordered to get whatever paper they could and to requisition it along with food, whether it be wrapping paper, notebooks, or other sorts. The partisans would pay huge sums to agents who stole paper from German stocks. The bulk of the newsprint for those units which had regular contact with the Soviet side came by air. "But it was impossible to carry five to six poods [One pood is about thirty-six pounds] when the otryad was on the move," a Soviet analyst comments. "Thus the paper had to be collected among the population," a difficult and most unsatisfactory undertaking. The paper shortage contributed to the reduction in size, to the frequently far from impressive appearance, and to the poor legibility of the leaflets and newspapers produced by the partisans. It would appear that the transport of newsprint, while occurring systematically, did not have top priority in Soviet air supply to the partisans.

4. Personnel

Various sources indicate that the editors of partisan papers and leaflets could be regular Party members, commissars or deputy commissars, former journalists, and minor officials, but frequently also men who had had no previous experience in psychological warfare, particularly

not in underground printing. There were only a few Civil War veterans with such experience (and perhaps men who had engaged in underground work abroad); on the technical level especially nonprofessional personnel was employed; for instance, a tank officer worked as a printer.

The standard staff of a partisan (or underground Party) printing unit consisted of the following: (1) Boston type press: 1 editor, 1 proofreader, 2 staff writers, 6 printers (who also wrote articles and features and distributed the paper); (2) Liliput type press: 1 man, who did all printing, setting, and writing, under the direction of a *raikom* secretary or partisan unit commissar.

[*Nachrichten,* Nr. 4, September 10, 1943, p. 5. In a unit in the Bryansk forest, the editor of the two-page *Partizanskaya Pravda,* Korotkov, had two assistants as staff writers, and two girl partisans as typesetters. (Andreyev, p. 330.)]

Often the same personnel was used for other political and propaganda purposes, although a good deal of nonprinted psychological warfare (such as lectures, "agitation" meetings, etc.) was conducted by partisans assigned to these tasks exclusively. The greatest demand on personnel without special skills was to distribute the papers. Here everybody would be enrolled—local women, children, partisans on raids, lecturers, and others.

5. Sources of Information

Partisan leaflets, and particularly newspapers, drew on a variety of sources for their information. These may be broadly divided into Soviet sources and local sources.

The regular Soviet radio broadcasts were frequently monitored by partisans, and their dispatches were reproduced (particularly those slowly dictated after midnight). It was primarily in this manner that the partisans learned the latest war communiqués and world news. Other overt sources included Soviet newspapers, which, as indicated, were brought into occupied territory in considerable numbers and with striking regularity from mid-1942 on. Finally, partisans also copied the texts and themes from Soviet propaganda material which they received either for distribution or reproduction on occupied soil, or which they happened to find.

In addition, however, there were Soviet *agitprop* directives of a classified nature. Instructions were occasionally dropped from planes or brought in by individuals flown into partisan-held areas, though during the first year or so of partisan activity there is no evidence of any systematic flow of instructions. Radio messages aimed specifically at the partisans (whether in code or clear cannot be determined) also periodically contained instructions on psychological warfare. Since only one German summary of such propaganda directives by radio is available, it is quoted here to indicate the tenor and scope:

Agitation

Agitation among the population in the occupied areas, if correctly conducted, is extremely valuable. Communist posters, such as the well-known "Let Us Crush the Fascist Monster," leave a particularly deep impression in the occupied territory. They give evidence of the strength of Soviet power. Also, the illegal newspapers in Belorussia, *Sovetskaya Belarus* and *Partizanskoye Slovo,* are effective. The importance of the printed word in the occupied area should not be underestimated.

One partisan division in Belorussia has made available 23 agitators for propaganda among the population. In spite of the strictest surveillance by the occupiers they have held

indoctrination assemblies and have made speeches in 15 Belorussian communities occupied by the Fascists. The theme was "The Defeat of the Germans Before Moscow in December 1941." The impending change in the course of the war through the establishment of a second front in Europe constitutes an appropriate theme for mass indoctrination *(Massenaufklaerung).*

Reconstruction of the Party Organization

Each city, each district must have its illegal Party organization and Young Communist League.

Elements Friendly to the Germans

In some areas of Belorussia the partisan leaders have succeeded in winning the confidence of the Germans and in getting their people placed as policemen, mayors, and kolkhoz administrators. Under certain circumstances, those trusted men render good service.

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO (Abw. I und III), "Awehrnachrichtenblatt Nr. 8; Sendung eines russ. Senders fuer Partisanen," I August 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 25784/43)]

Likewise, the so-called Stalin directive of December 1942 [see Sect. IV, A, and n. 64] falls into the rubric of basic Soviet instructions for partisan propagandists.

The partisans used their own ideas and experiences for psychological warfare. Editors, commissars, and politruks, heads of political sections, secretaries of underground Party and Komsomol units, as well as commanders of partisan otryads contributed themes, slogans, and texts. News items to be exploited in verbal propaganda could be suggested by any band member or civilian informant. In addition, the partisans used captured German and collaborator material.

[One report suggests the existence of something approximating a partisan news service, disseminating the same items to a variety of units, presumably by radio. Other captured materials, used also in front-line propaganda, were the Reichenau order of 1941 described in Sect. V, D, and the Keitel order on the branding of prisoners of War.]

Except for the small number of "staff writers," there seem to have been no institutionalized sources of information in partisan printed media. It appears that the unit's intelligence section periodically provided the propagandists with information. In some instances, efforts were made to organize a more regular (and at least apparently, more formidable) network of indigenous correspondents along the lines of the widespread and well-established peacetime system of *rabkory* and *selkory* [Workers' correspondents and village correspondents—amateur journalists who would occasionally contribute items of local or technical interest]; likewise, partisan commanders and staff officers periodically wrote up the accomplishments of their units and reported on agitation rallies held in the units or villages.

[For a discussion of this system, see Tsanava, II, 73 ff.]

Though persuasive bits of local news received considerable attention, special emphasis was given to statements and writings of men whose names were presumably surrounded with an aura of prestige or fear. In addition to the pronouncements of Stalin, those of other Soviet leaders, such as Ponomarenko or Kalinin; dispatches concerning partisan leaders, even in distant bands, such as Kovpak or Fyodorov; and writings by popular poets and journalists—the Belorussians,

Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas, or the Ukrainian, Volodymyr Sosyura—were communicated from the Soviet side to the partisan staffs, to be specially featured.

§II. Partisan Psychological Warfare Directed at German Personnel

A. THE PROBLEM

"Propaganda and agitation" traditionally occupied a primary place in Soviet thinking and indoctrination. However, the application of propaganda methods to partisan warfare against the Germans presented specific problems for which the partisan leadership was ill prepared.

The orthodox Soviet approach concentrated on articulate and recognizable "propaganda" in the narrow and direct sense, though indirect nonverbal techniques were frequently and successfully practiced by Communist groups. Yet there appeared to be virtually no body of theory to prepare the partisan commander or political officer for systematic use of psychological warfare against enemy forces. Because of the nature of partisan-German relations and because of the ratio of their forces, the partisans could not realistically aspire to the wholesale conversion of German troops and civilian officials. Positive appeals could be made to non-Germans fighting against them, both to ex-Soviet citizens collaborating with the Germans and to non-German Axis troops. Psychological warfare aimed at the Germans themselves was largely restricted to general discouragement, since the partisans seemed to assume that inducements to surrender would be futile and probably none too desirable for practical reasons of guarding, feeding, and control.

The partisan approach to the Germans thus overwhelmingly utilized the "stick" rather than the "carrot" technique. Verbal efforts—be they leaflets, posters, newspapers, or broadcasts—were minimized. In part, this resulted from the belief that positive appeals were futile; in part, it reflected the shortage of printing facilities and supplies, which were restricted largely to appeals aimed at other elements more likely to respond, notably the indigenous population; in part, it was due to the lack of German-speaking partisans and of effective means of transmitting prepared materials.

Furthermore, a considerable number of measures intended to undermine German morale and discipline were aimed simultaneously at the civilian population on occupied soil. Frequently one gathers that the efforts were really aimed at the latter group, in an attempt to establish close identification of purposes and interests against the Germans.

Finally, partisan preoccupation with psychological warfare directed at the Germans was proportionate to the units' strength and relative security. During the early months of the occupation, the handicaps under which the small detachments labored led them to concentrate on more vital problems. Conscious psychological warfare operations on their part appear to have begun only in 1942, when the expansion and consolidation of the units took place and a change in popular temper occurred.

B. DIRECT AND VERBAL PROPAGANDA

Virtually no partisan leaflets directed specifically at German personnel have been found. Not even in the later stages of the war, when the partisans were sometimes employed by the Soviet command to distribute propaganda material on occupied territory, did they act as middlemen for the dissemination of appeals such as these that the Red Army launched in the name of the Free Germany Committee and other groups of German prisoners in the USSR.

[There are some (unconfirmed) indications that in a few instances they might have engaged in such work where they were located near the front lines and could distribute material to German combat forces.]

From time to time, however, the partisans did distribute German-language leaflets dropped from Soviet planes and did engage in almost prankish small-scale operations. Many of these seem to have been carried out by members of urban underground groups rather than by combat partisan detachments, largely because German personnel were located in urban areas. According to the postwar memoirs of a Soviet political officer in the Bryansk area, a rather harmless operation consisted of placing a handwritten note in the napkin of the Trubchevsk Field Police chief, which read: "You are celebrating the victory of Fascist arms too early, you dog. Hitler will be *kaputt.* The partisans." Similar notes, the same source avers, were placed in the pockets of German soldiers and collaborators while they were attending a movie.

[Andreyev, p. 257.]

In another instance, leaflets were placed on the seats of a local movie theater prior to the beginning of a show for the Germans; in a third case, German-language leaflets were smuggled into German billets in Novozybkov. Both the latter reports appear to speak of leaflets dropped from Soviet planes and distributed by individual "agitators."

Only in the very first and last months of the war were there direct appeals to German soldiers involving the partisans. In the early weeks of the war, before Soviet psychological warfare had outgrown some of its early doctrinal limitations and when Red Army leaflets still contained appeals to "workers and toiling peasants" in the German ranks, there appeared a leaflet, evidently produced and distributed by the Soviet Army, hopefully "explaining" the nature of the partisan movement to the German troops.

WHO ARE THE PARTISANS? [it began]

German soldiers! You are told that partisan warfare waged by the Russians is dishonest and the partisans shoot at you from behind. The German courts want to treat them as bandits.

It proceeded to explain that the partisans were patriots in the same tradition as the German and Austrian heroes of resistance under Schill, Luetzow, and Andreas Hofer in the days of Napoleon. "The partisans are the people itself, seeking to defend their home and homeland against Hitler the tyrant. The Russian partisans are not the enemies of the German workers and peasants." The Russian toiler, the leaflet continued, had not freed himself from tsarism and capitalism to succumb to German *Junkers* and plutocrats. Therefore, it concluded with a *non sequitur,* "German soldier, come over to the side of the Red Army."

["Wer sind die Partisanen" (Red Army leaflet) n.d. (GMDS, 217 ID, 17415/26).]

It did not take long for Moscow to realize the futility of such efforts. There is no evidence that leaflets of this sort were used after October 1941. Only in the last victorious stages of the struggle, with the Germans in retreat and the partisans increasingly operating a quasi-military auxiliary force coordinated with the regular Red Army, were there partisan leaflets again specifically calling for the surrender of German soldiers.

[In December 1943, when the Germans had partly evacuated the town, partisans distributed such appeals in Mogilev.]

Occasionally partisans would post or distribute letters addressed ostensibly to German officials. Written in Russian, their purpose was largely to impress the indigenous population by ridiculing the enemy and stressing his cowardice or brutality.

[Thus one Russian-language poster in the Bryansk area was ostensibly addressed to a local German official: "Do you still remember, Mr. Heinroth, when, during the fighting at Pervomaisk, you threw away your field glasses, maps, and plans, and cried : 'My legs! My legs! Save my head from the partisan bullets!'?" [See Appendix, Document 36.]]

Small-scale and sporadic though they were, such operations undoubtedly had some effect on the Germans, even though their primary target was the indigenous population.

Even less use was made of oral communications. Word-of-mouth propaganda and the spreading of rumors, so feasible in partisan relations with the population, were virtually impossible with the Germans; however, some rumors spread among the civilian population did indirectly reach German personnel as well. Nor is there any evidence of the use of loudspeakers by partisans in combat operations against the Germans.

[One Soviet account mentions, more in the nature of a practical joke than as a serious PsyWar operation, the tapping of German telephone lines by a subordinate of Sidor Kovpak, a partisan commander. The partisan called the local "Gestapo" office to threaten an attack on its post. Kovpak was apparently displeased with this and reprimanded the partisan for disclosing the proximity of his men. [P. Vershigora, *Lyudi s chistoi sovestyu* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1951), p. 145.]]

C. NONVERBAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

The "creation of impossible conditions for the enemy" was a prime object of partisan activity from the outset. This included harassing civilian and military personnel and engendering panic and terror among the Germans. Most partisan psychological warfare efforts against the Germans fell into this rubric, but there is little indication of any articulate plan or theoretical basis on which this campaign was waged.

Its first, and in many respects most effective, asset was the very existence and activity of the partisans, who were living proof that the rear areas had not been subdued and that the war continued hundreds of miles behind the front. The partisans could strike suddenly, now here, now there, blowing up trains and trucks, attacking individual German officers and men, cutting communications and supply lines. Among the scant German forces responsible for the security of the vast alien areas, partisan activity, regardless of its military significance or failure, was bound to promote a state of nervousness and insecurity. This indeed was one of the primary purposes of partisan warfare, and it was in this, more than in other ways, that it was strikingly successful.

The initial impact was greatest on the lower German ranks who came into physical contact with the partisans and the effects of their operations. Higher echelons, and especially German staff officers, were at first all but oblivious to the potential threat that the partisans repreesnted. Gradually, however, a feeling of imminent danger and even panic penetrated higher command levels as well as the civilian and economic administrations.

[The atmosphere was typified by the ditty popular among rear area security units in 1942:

"Vorne Russen,
Hinten Russen,
Und dazwischen
Wird geschussen."

Russians ahead,
Russians behind,
And in between
Shooting.

(E. E. Dwinger, *Wiedersehen mit Sowjetrussland,* Jena, 1942.)]

This insecurity was heightened by the shortage and inferior quality of German rear area personnel and supplies. Finally, psychological unpreparedness for operations of this nature contributed to the failure of German antipartisan warfare.

Results of these conditions were frequent German overestimation of partisan strength and potential, as well as widespread physical fear among personnel assigned to partisan-threatened areas. The partisan-controlled territory expanded rapidly, and, in addition to depriving the Germans of sources of food and manpower in 1943-44, it contributed to the enemy's realization that the war was being lost. Increasing defection of "neutral" and collaborating elements to the partisans only emphasized this trend. In the latter part of the war, German soldiers would not stray from the main arteries of communication or walk singly even in the most strongly garrisoned towns. The feeling of isolation and danger was particularly pronounced among the thinly manned outposts and strongpoints which dotted the countryside.

[For two fictional but psychologically sound accounts of the climate in which such German units operated, see Theodor Plivier, *Moskau* (Munich: Desch, 1952), and Gerhard Kramer, *Wir werden weiter marschieren* (Berlin: Blanvalet, 1952).]

To some extent, the Germans' own attitude contributed to this frame of mind. By first ignoring the problem and then proscribing the partisans as "bandits" and "marauders," the German High Command encouraged the feeling that the opponents were not orderly, "respectable," military adversaries but men whose activities were unpredictable and characterized by "deceit." Partisan warfare was certainly unorthodox. Raids from ambush, while employed primarily for tactical reasons, tended to produce terror among the Germans. As early as 20 July 1941 an order of the Political Administration of the Northwest Front of the Red Army, speaking of "sudden short raids from ambush on live targets," advised: "Such raids engender panic in his [the enemy's] ranks, induce him to flight, and create confusion among his units and subdivisions, whereby his further movement is held up and serious losses are inflicted on personnel and matériel." [See Appendix, Document 2.]

Another 1941 Soviet order authorized partisans to wear German uniforms because "this permits the group to approach its target undetected and to exploit rumors regarding the activity of partisans in German uniforms, to arouse mistrust among individual [German] soldiers, and to undermine their morale."

["Denkschrift ueber die Kampftaetigkeit von Partisanengruppen und -abteilungen im Ruecken des Feindes" (GMDS, 112 ID 19643/24).]

In both instances, the psychological impact, aimed at terrorizing and demoralizing the Germans, was a by-product of military action; yet the Soviet command was unmistakably aware of its

effectiveness. For evidence that operations of this nature were conducted specifically for psychological warfare purposes, there are only scattered Soviet assertions. Thus in January 1942 a group of partisans in Western Belorussia raided the town of Slutsk ostensibly "to spread panic among the Hitlerite garrison." That other aims were included in this operation is indicated by the remark that during their raid the partisans seized the city bank and absconded with all of its valuables.

[Tsanava, I, 125.]

Partisan use of assassination, especially of German (and collaborating) officials and civilians, was in part also calculated to spread fear and panic. Indeed, the effect on other Germans and collaborators as well as on the indigenous population was probably more important than the sheer desire to eliminate a despised (and at times even an unknown) German. While the partisans' call for "vengeance" helped fortify their own morale and provided a potent stimulus to the enrollment of the population, it was also meant to—and did—serve the cause of terrorizing the Germans.

Unfortunately most of the available German reports focus on tactical and technical aspects of partisan raids, and Soviet accounts generally fail to give details of assassinations and terror raids staged by the partisans. Nevertheless, the general impression of the psychological effect which such attacks produced on the Germans is confirmed by postwar statements of German officers and Soviet refugees.

[For instance, a refugee respondent gives examples of militarily useless partisan attacks, which "made the Germans tremendously nervous." (Russian Research Center, B 7, #192, pp. 45-46, 66.)]

The assassination of specific individuals, such as German district commissars, police officials, or agricultural supervisors, was often left to urban underground and partisan teams, many of which acted in conjunction with partisan field combat staffs; these generally sought to avoid direct contact with the Germans.

[Other attempts on Germans and collaborators were carried out by special diversionist teams and individuals either sent in or left behind by the NKVD or the Red Army.]

In addition to the casualties that the occupation administration suffered in this manner, the climate of fear and suspicion was intensified by the publicity, both German and partisan, attending the death of the victims of such attacks.

[Obituaries and eulogies appeared regularly in the newspapers and magazines published by and for the Germans in the occupied territories.]

The peak of "terror attacks" (as the Germans were anxious to call them) was reached in the late summer and fall of 1943. Its most spectacular example, widely exploited in partisan and Soviet propaganda, was the assassination of Wilhelm Kube, General Commissar for Belorussia, in September 1943. Other officials were threatened with a similar fate; sometimes there may have been false rumors, but frequently such threats, even if not carried out, were sufficient to induce panic. The widespread attacks on collaborators likewise had a damaging effect on German morale. In addition to depriving the occupying authorities of their "grass roots" contacts, these attacks once more emphasized the ubiquitous presence of the partisans.

Related to these partisan efforts to increase German insecurity was infiltration of German and collaborator organizations. Agents who achieved this could and did spread rumors in addition to pursuing their basic tasks of gathering intelligence or sabotaging German endeavors. Paradoxically but obviously, it was often the German *discovery* of such agents, sometimes in positions of considerable trust, that made the occupation personnel jittery and aware of being surrounded, watched, and exposed to constant dangers. The feeling of insecurity and nervousness that was created among the German occupation personnel probably had a far-reaching psychological impact on the individual German. It is a common phenomenon that individuals with a pronounced inferiority complex will go to considerable lengths to disguise their feeling of insecurity by an outward show of superiority and aggressiveness. It is likely that the partisan movement caused many a German to react in a similar manner. The individual German soldier, SS man, or official may well have compensated for his fear by an open show of contempt for the "inferior" Slav. Thus the partisan movement helped increase the Germans' tendency to alienate the indigenous population through psychologically unsound treatment.

D. PROVOCATION

In the conduct of their operations, the partisans periodically impersonated German officers. In some instances, the purpose was primarily to deceive the German administration (a difficult task) and the local collaborators (a more likely possibility). In other cases, however, such deceptive maneuvers were apparently intended to widen the gulf between Germans and inhabitants. A refugee source speaks of the leader of a small partisan detachment in the Vinnitsa area who posed as a German on visits to small and isolated villages. If he encountered Germans there, "he would get close enough to be able to shoot before they realized what was happening. Actually he did very little military damage but the spectacular nature of his activities aroused a lot of public sympathy and admiration [and] he frightened the Germans."

Another hypothesis, which cannot be supported by clear-cut evidence, has been advanced most frequently by Soviet refugees who lived in partisan-threatened areas: the inevitable result of partisan attacks on German personnel was ruthless German retaliation—not so much against partisans, on whom they generally could not lay their hands, as against innocent civilians. The result of this process was a chain reaction in which the interests of the Germans and those of the bulk of the indigenous population drew further and further apart. German eradication of entire communities in retribution for partisan raids could only rally neighboring residents to the partisans' side.

To what extent the touching off of this chain reaction was a conscious purpose of their attacks cannot be ascertained. At any rate, partisan technique strengthened the hand of the most uncompromising elements in the German Army, SS, and bureaucracy, and provoked the extremes in anti-partisan warfare which came to characterize most German operations. In turn the provocation of the Germans won for the partisans the support of the indigenous population, as it were by ricochet. Even those who initially had little or no enthusiasm for the Soviet cause, and particularly for the partisans, usually were constrained to regard the partisans as their only effective protectors against German retribution. Though other factors contributed to the extremes of antipartisan warfare, the partisans' own efforts mightily accelerated the trend.

E. TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR

The partisans focused their efforts on subversion rather than conversion because they had realistically appraised the situation. By its very nature, however, their approach limited the scope of psychological warfare possibilities. Furthermore, German conviction that "ruthlessness" and

"deceit" characterized the activities of the partisans (a conviction that they generally made no effort to dispel) eliminated any possibilities of attracting Germans to the partisan side.

However, in one area (the treatment of German captives), partisan behavior was likely to influence German reactions directly. German reports, probably exaggerating, frequently stressed that the partisans killed captured troops; others spoke of instances in which prisoners were tortured and the bodies of soldiers killed in battle were mutilated.

Undoubtedly, killing and mistreatment of German soldiers occurred, partly because of the spontaneous quest for revenge and because of general lack of discipline. This was especially true of the early stage of partisan warfare, when controls were lax, directives few and unenforced, and the partisan bands often had no permanent headquarters where prisoners could be kept or guarded, and no opportunity (as there was later) to transfer captives across the front or by air to the Soviet side. General Red Army policy, on the other hand, apparently discouraged indiscriminate shooting of prisoners, even by partisans.

As the partisan movement expanded and assumed the characteristics of a regular military organization, treatment of captives reportedly improved, apparently so that the partisans could obtain intelligence and win the active support of those Germans who had fallen into their hands.

[A report of the German Ninth Army in November 1943 stated that prisoners were well treated and well fed. They were offered cigarettes as an inducement to furnish information and were assured that letters to their relatives would be surreptitiously delivered to German Army Post Offices. Moreover, in July 1943, the 3d Leningrad Partisan Brigade was ordered not to shoot its prisoners, but to bring all of them, including the wounded, through the lines to the Red Army rear area. Contrary to previous practice, deserters from the German Army, whether Russian military collaborators or Germans, who volunteered to fight with the partisans, were to be accepted as members of partisan units.]

In the later stages of the war, instances multiplied of German prisoners being employed by the partisans not only for menial tasks (as was at times the case in 1942) but for military and intelligence work. Nevertheless it would seem correct to conclude that fear of the partisans remained a serious deterrent to German defection until the very end—an inevitable result of the partisans' emphasis on terror methods in their dealings with the Germans.

F. CONCLUSION

Because the partisans were preoccupied with demolition and military pursuits, and with attempts at influencing indigenous personnel, they restricted distinctive psychological operations aimed at the Germans to a few sporadic efforts. At the same time, the psychological impact of *other* partisan activities on the Germans, economic or propagandistic, was impressive.

One difficulty involved in conducting psychological warfare against the Germans was the lack of direct contact between partisans and Germans. The partisans preferred not to risk their lives in distributing leaflets or posters among the Germans. They seemed to realize that the impact of sporadic verbal propaganda upon the occupying forces would be small and that any effect obtained would stem more from the over-all climate of insecurity and the terror policy than from individual and narrowly propagandistic operations. If they had the choice, they would rather kill a German official than place a leaflet on his desk.

No evidence has been found to indicate whether or not the relative neglect of verbal propaganda addressed to the Germans was in line with Soviet directives. It appears likely that it was. This is

partly borne out by the fact that the Red Army Political Administration, which ordered the partisans to distribute all sorts of printed matter, never seems to have used them for the dissemination of delicate and sensitive material employed in persuading German, as distinct from Axis, troops to defect. The Communist Party does not appear to have been at all concerned with the conversion of the Germans. One may suggest that such a restriction reflected a decision of higher Soviet propaganda agencies, which preferred to have the partisans concentrate on operations for which they were uniquely fitted. In addition, they were not entrusted with tasks requiring close coordination with and attunement to general Soviet psychological warfare as well as a linguistic skill that the average partisan political officer failed to possess.

There were additional objective factors that hindered partisan appeals to the Germans. Their target was limited to rear area security troops and civilians, rather than combat forces, and even there the range of effective action was narrowly circumscribed: in partisan-controlled areas, there were no Germans; in thoroughly German-held areas there were no partisans to speak of. Efforts were hence limited to the twilight zones between German and partisan control, and to urban areas where occasional forays could be conducted with the aid of resident anti-German elements.

The impact of the partisans on German morale and discipline was striking, but its success stemmed largely from the wide range of partisan activities, as well as from their reputation as savage avengers and assassins, rather than from distinct and purposeful psychological warfare operations conducted by the partisans themselves.

§III. Partisan Psychological Warfare Directed at Axis Troops

In the course of the war on the Eastern front, the German armed forces were supplemented by contingents of non-German Axis troops.

[The terms Axis and allied troops, as used in this section, refer to armed units stationed in occupied Soviet territory and consisting of nationals of countries allied with the Reich (but neither German, nor indigenous to the Soviet areas).]

Many of these—notably the Rumanian and Italian divisions—operated in the south, where there were few partisans.

[These forces encountered some partisans in the Crimea and the North Caucasus. Moreover, urban Communist undergrounds existed in various Italian-controlled communities in the Don Basin and in Rumanian-held Odessa. However, there is little evidence of partisan appeals to the occupation forces and military government there. This is due in part, it seems, to the fact that the population and partisans here looked

upon them as the occupiers and not, as farther north, as semiconscripted mercenaries likely to desert the German cause.]

Other sizable units—primarily Hungarian and Slovak but also some French and Croatian—were assigned to rear areas in which the partisans were active.

In their attitude toward such Axis troops, the partisans appear to have taken several factors into account. Notably, the non-German troops were much inferior to German forces in training, leadership, and morale. Once the tide of war had turned, it was therefore easier to capture them and to induce them to join the partisans. In addition, these forces represented nationalities which, in the Soviet outlook, had been victimized by the Germans and whose "most progressive elements" were fighting on the Soviet side against the Axis. These factors became the basis for a

substantive and important distinction that arose between the partisan approaches to Axis and to German troops. The German forces were largely written off as enemies, but appeals could be made to Axis soldiers along lines similar to those used in persuading Soviet collaborators, the major theme being the community of interest of all nationalities oppressed and enslaved by the Nazis, and hence a unity of purpose between partisans and Axis forces against the Germans.

The available material is particularly poor on this aspect of partisan psychological warfare.

[Though it cannot be discussed within the framework of this section, we must record the overwhelming impression that, by and large, the indigenous population viewed the allied troops, notably Rumanian and Hungarian, with greater hostility than it felt for the German. (See Russian Research Center, series B 6, #81); for a contrary view, at least so far as Italian relations with the Ukrainian population are concerned, see Giovanni Messe, *Der Krieg im Osten* (Zurich: Thomas-Verlag, 1947), and Aldo Valori, *La Campagna di Russia, 2* vols. (Rome: Grafica Nazionale, 1950-51)]

The following must therefore be regarded merely as suggestive of the partisans' approach; moreover, part of the material stems from Soviet postwar accounts and is therefore open to some doubt.

The evidence indicates that generally Axis troops were neither killed nor maltreated after their capture by the partisans. When five Hungarian soldiers were seized by partisans in the Bryansk area in July 1942, the partisans (as one of the Hungarians reported to the Germans after his subsequent escape) "believed [they had] found in us good fellow-fighters against the German forces. We were therefore relatively well treated." According to a Soviet account, the partisans in this area had a Hungarian Communist with them who wrote leaflets in conjunction with the editorial staff of the partisan newspaper:

Partizanskaya Pravda and Paul [Feldes, the interpreter] distributed hundreds of leaflets among the Hungarian soldiers and the troops of the Hungarian Labor battalions, appealing to them to revolt and take over. The soldiers replied, 'You are deceiving us.' We had neither the task nor the time to engage in diplomatic negotiations with them. It proved far easier to convince the soldiers of the sincerity of our intentions by other partisan means.

[Andreyev, pp. 331-36.]

This statement contains an implicit confession of the failure of partisan verbal propaganda to convince men before they captured. When larger groups of Hungarian troops were seized by the partisans in October 1942, they were well treated. Though at first refusing to help the partisans, later a good many of the Hungarians joined them. One was assigned to the unit's political section, and three were flown to Moscow for "political work" there. On the whole, the partisans followed a simple policy, "As soldiers, you must be ruthless avengers; as captors, you must teach the prisoners the truth."

[Ibid]

A French legionnaire who fell into partisan hands near Khotimsk (Eastern Belorussia) in November 1942 recounted a similar tale: he and another French soldier were well treated and encouraged to join the partisans. There is little doubt that the bulk of Axis forces and their allies knew, even though they may have had doubts, that after capture they would be accorded more favorable treatment than German prisoners—a fact that was bound to affect their steadfastness in combat.

[Another example of partisan behavior to prisoners and deserters among Axis troops is furnished in a German report on Rumanian units in the Crimea in 1943. According to the report the Rumanians were treated "correctly and well." The partisans explained to the Rumanians that only the Germans were their enemies. The captives were allegedly given the choice of returning to their former units or of remaining with the bands if they so desired. However, in this instance no additional desertions to the partisans ensued.]

Frequently partisan units took the initiative in encouraging defection among Axis troops. According to a Soviet account, the partisan leader, Sidor Kovpak, attempted to induce a Slovak lieutenant colonel to desert with his men. After initial contact was established and the colonel refused to come over in spite of his strong anti-German feelings, a secret deal was arranged by which partisans and Slovaks agreed not to fight each other. Another Soviet account records the efforts of the Saburov band to induce the surrender of the Slovak garrison at Buinovichi, an operation which, through the use of personal letters to Slovak officers and of girl messengers, eventually proved successful.

There are various reports that in 1943 and 1944 Axis deserters and captives were fighting with the partisans, though it is hard to determine to what extent partisan propaganda had influenced them. In the latter part of the war many defections were caused, largely by a realization that the Germans were losing the war and mistreating their allies. The above quotation concerning the Bryansk forest operation against the Hungarians suggests that leaflet propaganda was far from successful unless it was supplemented by persuasion in action. The role of verbal psychological warfare is difficult to assess because of the circumstances in which the Axis forces operated. To be successful, preparations for defection had to be kept secret from the Germans; therefore, no public appeals or arrangements could be made. Hence little German documentation is available on the clandestine negotiations and appeals that at times led to defections of German allies to the partisans.

There is no adequate sample of leaflets to permit a meaningful analysis of propaganda themes. What little there is suggests persistent use of anti-German patriotic themes and, at least in the case of the Slovaks, resort to the pan-Slavic slogans introduced in Soviet propaganda early in the war. A girl emissary from the Kovpak band, in delivering a message to the Slovak commander, was reported to have appealed to him: "If your fatherland is dear to you, if you want to see a free Slovakia, act as Colonel Svoboda did."

[A prominent Czech refugee and former Minister of War, then in the Soviet Union.]

The Saburov band likewise made reference to the All-Slav meetings in Moscow in its correspondence with a Slovak garrison it was trying to win over.

While the sum total of partisan psychological warfare measures undoubtedly had some effect on the Axis troops, the question remains to what extent specific propaganda operations can be credited with the defections. It appears likely that such operations contributed to a situation in which German military setbacks, material and moral frustration among the Axis troops, and anti-German resentment back home were probably more decisive.

§IV. Partisan Psychological Warfare Directed at Collaborators

A. MILITARY

The war in the East produced two striking phenomena: (1) large-scale collaboration of former Red Army men with the Germans, and (2) the return of a considerable number of these military collaborators to the Soviet fold.

The initial stage of the campaign followed the plans formulated by Hitler and most of the top Nazi hierarchy calling for unequivocal opposition to the arming of Soviet nationals. The rigid opposition in German government circles fitted in neatly with Nazi ideas about Soviet Russia and the war. The conviction that the German armies would be victorious after a short and decisive campaign, the concept of the Russian as an *Untermensch* (subhuman), and the goal of exploiting Russia's economic resources without regard to the fate of her people were based on ideas which left no room for any political incentives that might be offered to potential Russian collaborators. German realization that Soviet strength had been greatly underestimated, combined with the rise of the partisan movement, which the inadequate German security troops were unable to bring under control, brought about some changes in policy. The recruitment of former Soviet soldiers into small military collaborator units, undertaken experimentally in the fall of 1941, was gradually extended, reaching its peak in 1943. In fact, by the spring of 1943 military collaborator units, most of battalion strength, made up a large percentage of the German security forces engaged in antipartisan warfare.

[For discussions of military collaboration, see also George Fischer, *Soviet Opposition to Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952); Peter Kleist, *Zwischen Hitler und Stalin* (Bonn: Athenaeum-Verlag, 1950); Alexander Dallin, *The Kaminsky Brigade* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: HRRI, 1951) [hereafter cited as *Kaminsky].]*

Yet, in spite of such action, there always remained strong Nazi opposition to a full use of military collaborators.

In the official Soviet view military collaboration with the German forces naturally constituted treason. Nevertheless the Soviet Army made the collaborators one of the primary targets of its psychological warfare campaign, expending considerable effort to regain physical control over thern and to prevent the Germans from exploiting this source of manpower. For obvious reasons the partisans played an important role in these efforts. The very existence of collaborator units was a military challenge to the partisans, since most of these units were engaged in antipartisan warfare. It would have been impossible for the partisans, whose organization was not designed for offensive warfare, to eliminate their opponents by military force. Moreover, given the tensions within collaborator units, a psychological approach appeared more promising; it was even planned that at a later stage it would supplant military operations. In addition to the military danger, the collaborators represented an even more serious psychological threat. They demonstrated the lack of cohesion and homogeneity in Soviet society once Soviet controls were removed and emphasized the limitations of twenty years of Soviet indoctrination and training. At the same time they tended to neutralize the psychological impact of the partisans on the population, to whom they offered an alternative "indigenous" channel of action. Finally, and most important, they seemingly belied Soviet propaganda, which insisted on the solidarity of the Russian people, while the apparent willingness of the Germans to "ally" themselves with Russians contradicted (however spuriously) the Soviet claim that the Germans considered the Slavic people as inferiors.

One group of military collaborators needs special mention. This was the indigenous police *(Ordnungsdienst,* or OD), originally organized on a local basis, with limited functions. As the partisan movement gained momentum and German security forces no longer could adequately deal with it, the OD received better weapons and was largely committed against the partisans. The OD men were locally recruited and were therefore more exposed to partisan propaganda and

more vulnerable to partisan reprisals than the better-armed and more cohesive units of regular collaborators. Moreover, their families were often exposed to partisan retaliation. On the other hand, the OD men were well acquainted with local conditions, knew the terrain, were able to inform the Germans about local contacts with the partisans, and wherever they enjoyed some prestige were able to counteract partisan propaganda.

The military collaborators, almost from the beginning of their existence as units, became vulnerable to Soviet psychological warfare. Particularly sensitive spots were their motives for collaborating and their reaction to experiences with the Germans. One may distinguish between those who, without strong political convictions, had joined collaborator units primarily to regain freedom and to escape suffering in prisoner-of-war camps; those who, initially convinced of German victory, sought affiliation with the winning side in the hope of improving their own status and material condition; and finally those who became collaborators out of sincere anti-Soviet convictions and a belief that German victory would produce a better Russia. All three groups, whose motives frequently intertwined, were soon disillusioned, and, as the result of personal experiences with the Germans, substantial numbers in each group became easy targets for Soviet psychological warfare. Those who had joined the units to escape from prisoner camps had accomplished their purpose and were bound to their new masters by no deep loyalty. The opportunists often lost their enthusiasm as they realized the limited openings for advancement and prestige on the German side and the increasing military reversals suffered by the Germans. The anti-Communist patriot frequently came to the painful conclusion that continued indigenous rule, even Soviet, was the lesser evil when compared with the abuses of the invaders.

Soviet and partisan propaganda sought to appeal to all three groups of collaborators. The partisans provided the conditions that made it relatively easy to desert from the Germans, while their propaganda acted as a catalyst that speeded up the mental and emotional processes of the collaborators before they took the difficult step of changing allegiance a second time. The major prerequisite for partisan propaganda effectively to encourage the defection of collaborators was assurance that they would not be punished for disloyalty. The cardinal obstacle was fear of retribution for treason. In what appears to be full awareness of this problem, an important Soviet policy decision was made some time in 1942, giving the military collaborators an opportunity to "expiate their mistakes" and redeem themselves by joining the partisans.

In the first months of the war, the question of military collaboration was secondary; the few Cossack and Ukrainian units established largely on a local basis by German field commanders were not significant enough to warrant extensive Soviet countermeasures. There is no evidence that a distinction was made in 1941 and early 1942 between collaborating civilians and former Red Army men; whenever possible Soviet and partisan forces treated them as traitors and killed them. Whatever propaganda efforts the partisans made at this time aimed at the prevention of collaboration rather than at the defection of collaborators.

A change in tactics occurred in 1942 when the problem of collaboration became a real challenge to the Soviet regime. A number of partisans interrogated by the Germans indicated that there was a specific Stalin order providing for the "redemption" of collaborators by having them join the anti-German forces; unfortunately this order has not been found.

[It is possible that after some months of trial and error, this order was formalized in the general directive of December 1942 dealing with various aspects of partisan psychological warfare. However, leaflets printed as early as the fall of 1942 contained appeals to collaborators promising them immunity from prosecution if they joined.]

It is virtually certain that such a policy decision must have been made at the highest political level. Thereafter, it formed the cornerstone of partisan propaganda directed at the collaborators: to present convincing arguments to bring about defection and to alleviate fear of punishment.

1. Methods and Content

a. Verbal Propaganda

The propaganda media directed at military collaborators did not differ greatly from those used for other targets. Leaflets were employed extensively: many were produced on the Soviet side and distributed by partisans; others were printed by the partisans themselves.

[It is often impossible to determine whether a specific appeal originated on the Soviet or partisan side, was dropped by plane, or was distributed by agents or partisans. For the purpose of this section it will be assumed that any leaflet addressed to the collaborators was, if not produced by the partisans, at least distributed by them. Most leaflets in this category contained appeals to join the partisans; in a few, desertion to the Red Army was urged.]

The basic theme was that collaboration, though treasonable and despicable, could be atoned for if, and only if, the collaborator voluntarily became a partisan to prove his worth and loyalty in the "Patriotic War." Soviet propaganda appeals were designed to produce a hope-and-fear reaction among the collaborators: hope that by joining the partisans they would redeem themselves as members of Soviet Society, and fear that failure to defect would mean certain death, either immediately at the hands of the partisans or after the "inevitable" victory of the Red Army. A typical leaflet ran, "The homeland will forgive your disloyalty to the Russian people; it will forgive all those . . . who voluntarily come over to our side. . . . Do not hesitate—soon it will be too late." At the same time, the fate of those who failed to heed such advice was outlined clearly: "A terrible day of vengeance awaits all those who continue to collaborate with the Germans." The leaflets went to considerable length to alleviate fear. Besides emphasizing that "everybody who comes over to us voluntarily will be allowed to live and will be accepted in our ranks as a true son of the fatherland," many appeals contained ready-made excuses for the collaborators : "Everybody will forgive you, since it is known that many of you were prisoners of war [and suffered accordingly], while others were forced to help the Germans. Many of you were deceived and misled in various ways by the German cannibals."

The knowledge that the partisans would accept a man without branding him permanently as a traitor made his decision to defect easier. The implication of the ready-made formula given above was that the collaborator need not be ashamed of his past gullibility and change of heart, itself a curious admission, however inarticulate, of the potential effectiveness of German anti-Soviet themes. Leaflets almost acknowledged that some collaborators fought for the destruction of bolshevism, and even they were the objects of appeals. Significantly, wartime tactics did not call for attempts to convince them of the righteousness of communism but rather for a demonstration that the destruction of bolshevism was not the real goal behind the German invasion. "The Germans occupied France, Poland, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Yugoslavia—and why? Because Bolsheviks were ruling there and the kolkhoz system was introduced?" In the same vein one partisan leaflet addressed to Ukrainian collaborators implied that a "true patriot" may actually have been a collaborator: "In appealing to you we hope that you too, as *true patriots,* will cease serving the Fascists." Partisan propaganda then attempted to show that not by collaborating but by joining the partisans could a Russian express his patriotism, even if he was anti-Soviet in his attitude.

We partisans took up arms consciously to defend the honor, freedom, and independence of our native country—the Soviet Union. We are defending our people from destruction and slavery; we are defending our blood-soaked soil and the descendants of our fathers and our children. But what are you defending? You are defending the life of the German henchmen who mishandled your families . . . you are defending the interests of the German landowners.

A special effort was made to fan anti-German feelings among the collaborators by such statements as: "The German officers despise you in their hearts. They regard you as traitors to the fatherland, who hold German money dearer than the blood of your brothers, fathers, wives, and children." Another approach sought to stress the German purposes in recruiting collaborators: "The Fascist robber army has lost 6,400,000 officers and men, killed and captured. Don't you see that the Hitlerites want to use you only as cannon fodder for their own purposes?" Finally, the inevitable defeat of Nazi Germany was emphasized. With all the arguments presented, the same question was posed: "Do you really wish to shed your blood and sacrifice yourselves as mercenaries of fascism in the fight against the Soviet people?"

The emphasis on German atrocities was not peculiar to leaflets directed at collaborators; however, in such appeals, stress was laid on the fact that, by their collaboration, the indigenous troops became accomplices in the German crimes. "Soviet soldiers, is it not against your honor that you are helping to continue this criminal war? Don't you understand that you are helping the Fascists destroy innocent brothers, sisters, wives, and children of your own people?" Another series of slogans pertained to such German long-range aims as economic exploitation, enslavement of the Russian people, and the prospects of colonizing vast stretches of Soviet territory— aims which, it was asserted, the collaborators were unwittingly supporting.

Some account was also taken of the nationality question. German recruitment of collaborators favored, especially until 1943, non-Russian nationalities or those groups that the Germans considered more likely to oppose the Soviet regime. Thus Ukrainians, Cossacks, Baltic and Caucasian nationals were preferred. Soviet psychological warfare did not ignore the non-Russian nationalities, although there is no evidence that great stress was laid on national peculiarities or themes. It seems that an attempt was made to show the hypocrisy of German claims that specially favorable treatment was given to non-Russians. Thus one leaflet emphasized that Germany attacked the Soviet Union in order to grab the raw materials of the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Belorussia. Others showed by implication that the ultimate German war aim of dominating Europe precluded favorable treatment. "The Fascists need you, your lives, your blood, in order to fulfill their idiotic plans of bringing the peoples of Europe and of the Soviet Union into slavery." There were occasional pan-Slav overtones in appeals to Ukrainians and other collaborators.

Appeals to Lithuanian, Latvian, or Estonian collaborators were similar to other appeals; German atrocities, Soviet victories, and German war aims were stressed. However, there was a tendency in some leaflets to identify the Soviet cause with the true national interests of the formerly independent states. One leaflet addressed to Lithuanian soldiers described how the Germans suppressed Lithuanian nationalist students, and how the partisans came to their rescue. Without making any real concessions to Lithuanian nationalism, leaflets portrayed the partisans as the champions of the Lithuanian cause. Leaflets addressed to Estonian collaborators also sought to show that the Soviets were the champions of Estonian national existence, while the Germans were using them only as cannon fodder. The fact that many Estonians were killed at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-43 was cited as proof. Another leaflet claimed that Estonian soldiers were being sent to Africa to fight for German imperialism rather than Estonian independence.

Particular nationalities seem to have been taken into account mainly in local appeals, though those distributed by the partisans were often addressed to "Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian soldiers" or to the "Lithuanian Soldiers," and in some cases to specific units such as the "Ukrainian Regiment commanded by Major Weise." Leaflets composed by the partisans themselves were frequently addressed to specific target groups. They had the advantage of adding local color to the more general themes and of showing a collaborator the specific way in which to go about deserting. After the customary appeals one partisan leaflet concluded with the following:

We, the partisans of the Markov . . . Brigade, make the following proposals to you:

1. Kill your leaders who are serving the Germans faithfully.

2. Take your weapons and ammunition.

3. Proceed in the direction of the village [name], Myadelsk [?] Rayon, where we shall expect you. Your arrival time should be the first opportunity which presents itself. We will agree then and there on other conditions [of accepting you in our ranks].

Greetings from the Soviet partisans.

The staff of the Voroshilov Partisan Brigade.

At times the partisans employed letters addressed to individual collaborators as a means of encouraging defection. In one instance, a member of an Ostbataillon corresponded with a partisan group and received assurances of specific concessions for his battalion if its members deserted en masse. Another letter, addressed to the chief of an indigenous antipartisan unit in the Bryansk area, requested certain intelligence information and threatened to turn over to the German police incriminating evidence against him if he refused to cooperate.

Soviet psychological warfare directed at collaborators also relied on oral propaganda spread either by men who worked through civilians in touch with the collaborators, or by agents who had infiltrated collaborator units. In many cases it would be difficult to show that these agents were partisans; in all instances, however, it was necessary for them to establish contact with the partisans, since one major purpose of infiltration was to promote desertions to the partisan units operating in the vicinity. Such agents spread rumors and sowed distrust in an effort to drive a wedge between the collaborators and the Germans. Though rumors were widespread, their point of origin is naturally impossible to trace. It appears likely that the Germans often attributed them to Soviet agents when in fact they were the natural expression of discontent and distrust by a frustrated population. It remains true, nonetheless, that partisans and their agents did spread propaganda, and that everybody—including the civilians, the collaborators, and probably the Germans themselves—contributed to its dissemination.

b. Nonverbal Psychological Warfare

(1) Treatment of Captives.—The treatment of captured collaborators by the partisans scarcely figured in the direct propaganda campaign aimed at collaborator units. Its importance was nonetheless considerable. Since in the eyes of the Soviet government the troops fighting on the German side were *ipso facto* traitors, it could not appeal to them, as one customarily appeals to enemy forces to induce desertion, with promises of good treatment, safe conduct, and a speedy return home after the war. However, as has been shown, the collaborators had a chance to redeem themselves by voluntarily joining the Soviet side. If they were captured by force, they

had failed to avail themselves of this opportunity and could not expect treatment as bona fide prisoners. Moreover, the partisans could not capture or keep them in large numbers, for the same reasons that the Germans could not keep masses of prisoners. As in many forms of partisan warfare, there were only two extreme alternatives: Either a prisoner was killed or he became a partisan himself. *Tertium non datur.* Instances of captured collaborators being kept alive and being flown to Moscow for interrogation are reported only at moments when the Soviet authorities were eager to increase their knowledge of the German approach to the problem of military collaboration.

[Such was the case in 1942 when, for the first time, recruitment of collaborators was carried out on a large scale; and again in the spring of 1943, when the Germans initiated the so-called Vlasov propaganda operation.]

The fate of the captured collaborators depended primarily on the attitude of the individual partisan commander. In a large stationary brigade the chances of a rank-and-file collaborator being kept alive were somewhat better, especially where the partisans controlled the surrounding area. Not so the officers. The following observation by an officer of the Kovpak Brigade, a leading roving band, is probably typical for such units : "If the rank-and-file [collaborator] could hope for generosity from the partisans, the traitor chieftains [and] officers had little cheerful to look forward to if they fell into our hands."

[Vershigora, p. 193. Those who were accepted into the partisan organization were sometimes grouped together in special "punitive" units; presumably, this was the case where the partisans were relatively secure. [G. Linkov, *Voina* v *tylu vraga* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1951), pp. 486-88; see also Chap. Ill of this book.]]

Those collaborators who voluntarily heeded the appeal of the partisans to desert the Germans were usually incorporated into the partisan units. At times they were accepted as equals, and no stigma was attached to them.

Former collaborators were frequently credited by the Germans as fighting with particular stubbornness; they knew that certain death awaited them if they fell into German hands. Individual former collaborators even received medals and decorations from the Soviet government for their subsequent performance as partisans; some of them, however, may have been Soviet agents all along. In at least one known instance, several hundred Cossack collaborators, who deserted to the partisans in Belorussia, were divided into smaller groups and distributed among several brigades, to avoid a dangerous concentration of unreliable elements.

It is significant that in almost all treatment of collaborators the partisans kept the letter but often violated the spirit of their propaganda promises. There is evidence that former collaborators were usually not accepted as equals but were treated as second-class fighters. They were assigned to less desirable or less dignified tasks, or to missions unlikely to endanger the safety of the main partisan units. Former collaborators seeking to escape from the partisans were of course shot without question.

Ex-collaborators were frequently used as bait to induce others to join the partisans; they signed leaflets, for instance, appealing to their former associates to follow their example. These leaflets would point out how well they were received and how glad they were to be fighting with the partisans. One such leaflet read:

To all so-called "Ukrainian Soldiers," "Cossacks," and "Policemen," from former soldiers (captured Red Army men) of the 221st German Division, 230th Battalion, Ukrainian Company, now "Red Partisans" [13 names follow].

Comrades! Follow our example. . . . On 23 September 1942, we . . . went over to the Red partisans. The partisans were very friendly in receiving us. After a friendly conversation we were told that from now on we were partisans and citizens of the USSR with full rights. ... We felt suddenly as if a different blood ran through our arteries, the clear and hot blood of a citizen of the USSR.— *Appendix, Document 30.*

In one case a group of ex-collaborators was reported to have been fitted out with new weapons and equipment and paraded through the villages of the Bobruisk area; word of their treatment undoubtedly got back to those members of their unit who were still with the Germans.

The following example, referred to earlier, shows what concessions the partisans were willing to make to individual collaborator units. The Germans captured correspondence between a partisan brigade and an Ostbatail-lion in which the partisans were attempting to persuade the battalion to desert en masse to them. The following proposals were made:

1. The whole battalion with its weapons and equipment was to come over to the partisans.

2. The entire personnel of the unit were to be given a guarantee that their lives would be safe, that they would keep their freedom, and that they would receive a definite assignment within the partisan unit.

3. Members of the battalion would be given every assistance in finding their wives, children, and parents.

4. The battalion would maintain its unity as a partisan group, directly subordinate to the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement.

[The last concession would indicate that the unit was to function as an independent partisan brigade and that the correspondence was carried out with an operative group in Belorussia. The German report relating to this incident referred to captured documents from which this information was gained; the documents themselves have not been found among the German records, but there seems to be no reason to doubt the German account.]

It is not known whether the battalion did in fact desert. A similar case occurred, also in Belorussia, when the 2,000-man SS collaborator unit, the so-called Druzhina, deserted to the partisans. It afterwards operated as an independent partisan brigade and was commanded by the officer who had led the group under the Germans. There is some reason to suspect that several of the leaders of this unit, including the commanding officer, may have been Soviet agents.

(2) Infiltration.—The large-scale recruitment of former Red Army men into collaborator units offered the Soviets ample opportunity to infiltrate these units. Not all the prisoners of war who volunteered to fight with the Germans were eager to carry out their pledge, and some were susceptible to recruitment as Soviet agents. While exact figures cannot be given, a liberal sprinkling of pro-Soviet elements in collaborator units can be assumed to have existed, although their distribution among the units was largely a matter of chance. In addition, there were agents specifically assigned to subvert individual groups of collaborators.

[In April 1943 the Germans discovered that several Soviet political officers had infiltrated a collaborator unit and concluded that they had instructions to volunteer for such units if captured.]

Other persons were ordered to undermine the morale of collaborators from without, through civilians or other agents.

In many instances whole units infiltrated by agents deserted to the partisans after first killing the German personnel and then taking their arms and equipment. Such operations required the presence of liaison men who negotiated with the partisans in advance. The pattern seems to have required a Soviet (or partisan) attempt to win over some of the most important members of the units, some noncommissioned officers, and those holding machine guns or artillery, for instance. Often the rank-and-file collaborators had no advance knowledge of the desertion plans; at a favorable moment, usually in a place prearranged with the partisans, the switch took place. Those considered hopelessly hostile or those resisting the defection were shot, while the remainder had little choice but to obey in order to avoid being killed by the partisans or the ex-collaborators controlling the heavy weapons.

It was thus to the advantage of the partisans that the Germans for "ideological reasons" kept their collaborator units small, usually not exceeding battalion strength. It was much easier to arrange the desertion of a few hundred men than to induce a whole division to change sides. While the desertion of whole units was more spectacular, the steady trickle of individual defectors was equally important, and here the role of Soviet agents is more difficult to demonstrate.

In some instances, agents organized "conspiratorial" groups with ambitious goals. One such group, unearthed in the Kaminsky Brigade, had the mission of killing the unit commander, together with his closest associates, and of arranging for the transfer of the entire brigade, consisting of 7,000 men, to the partisans.

[This was in the Lepel area of Belorussia, to which the Kaminsky Brigade was transferred in mid-1943. From the German point of view, it was one of the most successful experiments in antipartisan warfare. (See *Kaminsky.)]*

Another unsuccessful attempt against Kaminsky was made when the *Za Rodinu* Partisan Brigade received instructions from the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement and allegedly from the NKVD to organize a secret group, which (according to an order intercepted by the Germans) was assigned to "terror attacks against Kaminsky and his following, against quarters of the troops, staff headquarters, etc. [Special noiseless arms and magnetic mines were to be supplied for this purpose.] Preparation of an insurrection among the Kaminsky troops." The preparations had already begun, and the insurrection was to be staged simultaneously with a frontal attack of the Red Army at the Bryansk front.

[The order was intercepted in March 1943 while the brigade was still in the Lokot area. Gruppe Ruebsam, Ic, "Bericht ueber die im Maerz aufgedeckte Verschwoerer-gruppe in Lokot," 24 March 1943 (GMDS, XLVII AK 37241/9).]

The effectiveness of Soviet infiltration techniques is borne out by many instances of desertion, to which agents contributed but for which they were by no means solely responsible. By the spring of 1943 the number of deserting collaborators was so great that the partisans set up special recruitment offices to receive, screen, and assign them.

[This was in the area just north of Belorussia. Another recruitment office in the Bobruisk area appealed to collaborators as early as the fall of 1942. Agents sent there by the Red Army to

establish recruitment centers also conducted propaganda activities; they succeeded in forming a cell within a collaborator battalion stationed at Bobruisk and through it accomplished the defection of several groups of men]

2. Conclusion

The Soviet approach to the problem of military collaborators with the Germans, as revealed through the partisan "middlemen," revealed a striking measure of tactical flexibility. On the one hand, partisan psychological warfare appealed to non-Communists as well as Communists, and it did so in non-Communist terms.

[Significantly, in some instances German propaganda, e.g., on the Vlasov issue and on the agrarian reform, forced the Soviets to counter German appeals through partisan propaganda. This counterpropaganda was the weakest and least convincing part of Soviet psychological warfare. See Sect. V, D, 2.]

On the other hand, it appealed to traitors, and in substance promised them immunity. It is worth noting that, while the former device had its slightly milder counterpart in the Soviet-side press, the permissive policy toward collaborators was not mentioned at all in overt Soviet propaganda, which depicted the collaborators as despicable traitors.

There can be little doubt that the partisans and Soviet policy-makers correctly gauged the situation calling for such tactics. Suffice it to cite the example of a Red Army major who, after his capture by the Germans, volunteered for service with a collaborator unit as a noncommissioned officer. In October 1942 a German observer described him as an idealist who genuinely hated the Soviet regime and had been willing to fight with Germany "for a free Russia against bolshevism." Unwilling to fight for the oppression of his homeland and having become acquainted with German aims and methods, the major deserted with sixty of his men. Such individuals could be reached by precisely the tactics the partisans adopted.

The longer the war continued, the more unreliable the collaborator units became. In October 1943, therefore, the German leaders ordered the transfer of all "Eastern battalions" out of Soviet territory to the West. While it is impossible to estimate to what extent partisan propaganda was responsible for the disintegration, it may safely be assumed that the process of alienation from the German side, perhaps inevitable under the circumstances, was measurably speeded up by the partisans. Their major contributions in this field lay probably not so much in the specific slogans they used but (1) in providing a "purgatory" through which the collaborator could pass to redeem himself in the eyes of "his" country; (2) in acting as a catalytic agent speeding the decision to break with the Germans; and (3) simply by being present and thus making defection possible and relatively easy.

B. CIVILIAN

The civilian collaborators constituted a separate target group for partisan propaganda, quite distinct from the military collaborators. As defined by the partisans and their Soviet superiors, a collaborator was anyone who assisted in the German war effort or the administration and exploitation of the occupied territories, i.e., virtually everyone not helping the Soviet or partisan cause. The attention of the partisans, however, was concentrated largely on those who served the Germans in some administrative or semipolitical capacity, such as mayors, village elders, newspaper editors, and members of municipalities. These officials were considered traitors in a more definitive and irrevocable sense than were the military collaborators. While the latter usually were anonymous individuals who represented a challenge not as individuals but because

they belonged to a specific group, the civilian administrators exercised much greater influence because of their position and standing in the community. It was this difference that accounted primarily for variations in partisan psychological warfare directed at civilian, as contrasted with military, collaborators.

In the early months of the German occupation, partisan propaganda appealed principally to those who had not yet committed themselves to the German side, warning them of the disastrous consequences such commitment would provoke. The embryonic nature of the movement as well as the rudimentary quality of this early propaganda severely limited its effectiveness. When the partisans had sufficient strength, their most common approach to the problem was to kill as many civilian collaborators as possible.

Beginning with the spring of 1942, as the strength, organization, and facilities of the partisans increased, a more systematic attempt was initiated to discourage collaboration and, in addition, to appeal directly to collaborators. The themes used in printed propaganda were similar to those employed in leaflets addressed to the military: German atrocities, Soviet victories, partisan heroism, Soviet patriotism, crimes of collaborators, threats of annihilation, and promises of forgiveness should the collaborator abandon his treacherous work. Printed appeals were usually aimed at the population at large, instead of at those who more specifically took an active part in the struggle.

Here, unlike the approach in appeals to military collaborators, threats decidedly prevailed over promises, and partisan leaflets were not nearly so likely to provide excuses for collaboration. The difference, however, was largely one of degree and emphasis, not of kind, since the idea that the civilian collaborators were deceived and threatened by the Germans into accepting their posts was also expounded. A further reason for a difference in emphasis was that the civilian target group was more exposed to partisan reprisals than the military. Unless accidentally captured or killed by the partisans, an individual military collaborator was immune from partisan wrath; not so the civilian collaborators, for, especially in twilight zones which neither Germans nor partisans controlled thoroughly, the partisans could almost always stage raids on small towns and kill or abduct German-appointed officials. Threats against collaborators' families were also used extensively—and carried out. This, too, was a technique reserved for the civilian collaborators, since unlike the military they generally lived in the area, with their families nearby.

The obvious effect of such terror methods was the increased difficulty the Germans had in finding administrators who were both willing to take jobs and possessed some prestige in their community. Mayors would visit "their" towns or villages only in daylight or accompanied by German escorts, or they would transfer residence to the nearest safe town. In some communities, no one was willing to accept the position of village elder, and it became necessary to rotate the office among the eligible males. Undoubtedly partisan terror thus seriously impaired the usefulness of the indigenous administration to the Germans and, indirectly, the economic benefits the Germans derived from the occupation.

There is some evidence that, as the war continued into 1943, the emphasis on terror became less pronounced. Captured collaborators were reported to have been released in the Bryansk area, largely for propaganda purposes, and a greater effort was made by the partisans to win over other collaborators before taking drastic action against them.

[This change of tactics was probably directed from higher Soviet quarters. As early as the summer of 1942, a high-ranking Soviet official and (then) member of the Politburo, Andrei Andreyev, was quoted as having indicated his displeasure at partisan terror methods:

It is completely wrong [for the partisans] to kill or manhandle representatives of the [German-controlled] indigenous administration, Russian policemen, starostas, etc. Quite the opposite: a very friendly relationship is to be established with Russian officials who serve the German forces, and they are to be told that their activities with the Germans will not be held against them ... if they covertly collaborate with the partisans now. . .. The Russians [in German service] shall under no circumstances be embittered against the partisans.

If this report is trustworthy, Andreyev's attitude cannot be considered the official Soviet view. For some speculation on his special position in this connection, see Sect. IV, C, 2 and Sect. VI, M.]

A letter [See Appendix, Document 34] from the partisans to an individual civilian collaborator—in this case, the head of a local labor office —illustrates another partisan technique. The man and his family were threatened with death if he failed to comply with the demand of the partisan commander who wrote the letter. It pointed out that, to be accepted in the good graces of the Soviet authorities, the collaborator would have to engage in specific intelligence missions, including the compilation of rosters of other known collaborators. The man was also asked to sign a note pledging to carry out the assigned tasks for the partisans. The partisans could threaten to turn such a note over to the German police. A similar technique was employed in another instance when a collaborator was warned that, if he failed to cooperate, his correspondence with the partisans would be delivered to the Germans.

By such methods, and assisted by the variegated system of Soviet infiltration into indigenous organizations, the partisans succeeded in placing their men in strategic spots.

[The existence of such agents in the German administration was occasionally uncovered by the occupying forces. They included not only clerks and interpreters but even high-ranking officials in such towns as Polotsk, Bobruisk, Vitebsk, Minsk, Kiev, Kharkov, and others. In some instances, they were in close touch with the partisans; in others, they operated independently.]

By direct terror they eliminated some and deterred others from working with the Germans and by threats and promises they won over to their side a considerable number of collaborators. The total impact of this two-pronged program was considerable. It must be borne in mind, however, that, while it seriously hindered German control, it also antagonized wide strata of the civilian population who, though disillusioned with the Germans, did not take kindly to partisan terror.

C. VLASOV AND THE PARTISANS

In the spring of 1943 the Germans launched an extensive propaganda campaign designed to regain the allegiance of the Russian population on occupied territory, to recruit ex-Soviet nationals for military service, and to encourage desertion among the Red Army soldiers. Extensive use was made of the name of Andrei Vlasov, a captured Soviet general who had become well known for, among other things, his role in the defense of Moscow in late 1941. General Vlasov was made the leader of a Russian anti-Soviet movement promoted in large part by the propaganda section (WPr) of the OKW and the intelligence branch *(Fremde Heere Ost)* of the OKH. At the same time, the numerous small units of collaborators on the German side were given the collective name of "ROA" *(Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Armiya,* or Russian Liberation Army). Though neither the character of these units nor their subordination to the German command was in any sense altered, the creation even of a mythical Army appears to have given some of the collaborators a feeling of belonging and was susceptible to propaganda exploitation.

The Vlasov propaganda exemplified the belated German espousal of what was called "political warfare," i.e., the use of political themes and a political program, ostensibly *by* Russians addressed *to* Russians, and intended to serve as incentives for political collaboration with, and desertion to, the German side. The political program, prepared by German officers working with General Vlasov, as embodied in the so-called "Smolensk Manifesto," contained rather general promises regarding the abolition of the collective farm system and forced labor, freedom of religion, national self-determination, and future cooperation with Germany.

[Though issued over the name of Vlasov and some of his Russian associates, the "thirteen points" were actually drafted by officers in the Wehrmacht Propaganda staff. They were never approved as a political program by Hitler or other leading Nazi Officials. On the Vlasov movement, see Fischer.]

After the first use of "Vlasov leaflets" in late 1942 and early 1943, Vlasov was permitted to visit the German-occupied areas in the spring of 1943 to deliver speeches and attempt to persuade the population to join his movement (and thereby support the Germans).

The new German approach to the question of military collaboration presented a challenge to Soviet and partisan propaganda, which had insisted on the mercenary character of the collaborators. Moreover, the Soviet authorities were clearly afraid that the change in propaganda was the harbinger of a genuine shift in German policy. The struggle behind the German scene which prevented such a reversal of policy from being instituted was not at all, or only imperfectly, known to the Soviet government. According to his aide, the Chief of Staff of the Ukrainian Partisan Movement (subsequently Minister of the Interior of the Ukraine), Timofei Strokach, realized that it had been primarily the stupidity and cruelty of German occupation policy which enabled the partisan movement to succeed. The Vlasov movement caused considerable consternation among high-ranking Soviet officials. Thus Alexander Shcherbakov, head of the Moscow Party organization and a member of the Politburo, is quoted as having characterized the pre-Vlasov era as the golden opportunity for the partisans: "We have to be thankful to the Germans that their policy enabled us to fan the flame of the partisan movement in the Ukraine." The Soviet leadership evidently feared that the Vlasov movement necessitated a substantial change in their own tactics. The Smolensk Manifesto, for instance, was characterized by Moisei Spivak, a secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, as capable of exciting the masses against the Soviet regime; and allegedly Stalin himself declared that the Vlasov movement constituted "at least a great obstacle on the road to victory over the German Fascists."

[RFSS, Pers. St., "Betr. Kapitaen Boris Russanow," 19 October 1943 (GMDS, EAP 161-b-12/94).]

The new German propaganda line should not have come as a complete surprise to the Soviet command. General Vlasov was captured in July 1942; in early September the first German leaflets appeared over his signature, blaming Stalin for all the sufferings of the Russian people. In December 1942 and January 1943, the Smolensk Manifesto appeared; and from early 1943 on the use of Vlasov's name and the ROA in German propaganda was steadily increased, at first experimentally on occupied soil, and later in the spring on a large scale, also directed at the Red Army. It is clear that the Soviet authorities at first sought to remain silent about Vlasov and only decided to act when he became a sufficiently important challenge to disturb Soviet loyalty. Initially, Moscow pretended to believe that Vlasov was being used by the Germans against his will and that the whole movement was but a clever trick initiated by Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry.

[If this reflected the genuine view of Moscow, it is an indication of the poor intelligence available to the Soviet leadership, since the Propaganda Ministry played a negligible role in starting the Vlasov campaign.]

Since the Germans had previously abstained from political warfare themes employing the Russians against Russians, and since Vlasov received little publicity from the Germans in 1942, Soviet political propaganda seemed content to discount the "Vlasov movement" as at most a potential danger.

While publicly refraining from mentioning Vlasov after his defection— i.e., resorting to what German propaganda called *totschweigen,* killing by silence—behind the scenes the Soviet leaders reacted promptly to Vlasov's disappearance. When his assault army was annihilated on the Volkhov Front in June 1942, Nikitin, the ranking partisan commander of the Leningrad area, ordered partisan units operating in the vicinity to find Vlasov and assist him in reaching safety on the Soviet side.

[X.A.K., Ic, "Tätigkeitsbericht," 1 November 1942 (GMDS, X AK 44431/39)]

There are no indications that this mission was motivated by any awareness of Vlasov's potential defection; it was rather an attempt to prevent a high-ranking Soviet general from falling into German hands. When this effort failed, silence fell. His capture was in no way mentioned by the Soviet press and propaganda machines.

Early in 1943 a high-level decision on the matter must have been made, apparently with the joint approval of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army and the *Agitprop* Section of the Party's Central Committee. The subsequent actions taken by Soviet and partisan psychological warfare organs suggest that the following was agreed upon:

(1) The civilian population on the Soviet side would presumably learn least about the Vlasov movement from German sources; hence the need here for counterpropaganda was slight. It was therefore decided to ignore the Vlasov question in the Soviet-side civilian press.

(2) The Red Army press, on the other hand, had to attempt to neutralize the effect of German "Vlasov propaganda." There was a certain lag between the onset of the German psychological warfare campaign and the Soviet reaction, but by late spring 1943 front area newspapers began "explaining" the movement to Red Army troops. The very fact that the Soviets reacted openly to the Vlasov movement only after the Germans forced the issue indicated Soviet perception of their own vulnerability and showed a reluctance to fight the Vlasov program on ideological grounds. A typical sample of Soviet counterpropaganda argued that (a) Vlasov had been forced by the Germans to give his signature to the appeals issued over his name; (b) the ROA was merely a German propaganda device; (c) German treatment of the prisoners was barbarous; (d) the German shift in propaganda themes was only a reflection of German weakness after the defeat of Stalingrad; (e) hostile collaborators were traitors.

[AOK 20, Ic, "Nr. 214/43," 26 June 1943 (GMDS, AOK 20, 36560/15).]

(3) On the German side of the front, the Vlasov movement became known so widely and so rapidly that a positive Soviet response to it was deemed necessary several months before the one initiated on the Soviet side of the front, lest silence be interpreted as indicating that there were no effective counterarguments. Countermeasures included overt media, such as leaflets published or distributed by partisans, newspaper articles in the underground Party and partisan press, rumors spread by partisans and special agents about the "real" nature of the ROA; and covert measures,

such as infiltration and subversion of collaborator units from within and without, and special assignments both to partisans and other Soviet agents to assassinate Vlasov and high-ranking officers of his movement.

[Thus the same Nikitin who, a year earlier, had ordered the partisans to search for Vlasov after his disappearance, in May 1943 charged other partisans with the mission to capture or assassinate Vlasov when he toured the Pskov-Gatchina area of the occupied USSR under German auspices. Radio communications from Nikitin's staff to a Leningrad Partisan Brigade, the text of which fell into German hands, contained the following instructions: "Nikitin has ordered that you should be alert to Vlasov's arrival in your rayon. Report immediately what steps you will be able to take to receive him." A few days later another communication stated: "The traitor Vlasov will speak on 10 May at Dedovichi [and] Porkhov. . . . Take all measures to capture or kill Vlasov no matter what the cost, otherwise we will be too late." (Amt.Ausl./ Abw. Ill, "Auftraege d. sowj. Agentendienstes gegen Vlasov," 6 July 1943, GMDS, H3/853.) Later in the war, other Soviet agents were sent to Berlin to assassinate Vlasov.]

1. Overt Propaganda

Printed propaganda intended to neutralize the effect of the Vlasov movement emphasized themes (1) to discredit Vlasov personally, (2) to discredit the ROA, and (3) to debunk its political program.

(1) Before July 1943 the attempts to discredit Vlasov personally were sporadic and haphazard. Until then partisan propaganda had employed such uncomplimentary epithets as "Vlasov the traitor," or "the spy of 1936." In particular, he was accused of having sold out the Second Assault Army, which he commanded on the Volkhov Front. Other partisan leaflets and newspaper articles ridiculed Vlasov's claim to the role of "savior of Moscow" in the winter of 1941. The most serious and probably most telling accusation, however, was leveled not against his own behavior but against his alliance with the Germans, which made him an accomplice of their atrocities. Finally, he was rebuked for having in cowardly fashion failed to take the opportunity to be rescued when he found himself encircled by the Germans.

In July 1943 the propaganda line changed. Several Red Army front newspapers made outspoken, though infrequent, reference to Vlasov in a version which also received wide dissemination in at least the northern German-held areas. The manner in which Vlasov was discredited is strongly reminiscent of the standard treatment preferred in such Soviet purges as those of Tukhachevsky and Beria. They "proved" that Vlasov was not only a spy and traitor but had been a capitalist agent for the better part of his career. The Main Political Administration of the Red Army officially accused him of involvement and participation in the "Trotskyite" conspiracy, along with Tukhachevsky. It was alleged that he was "unmasked" only when the danger of the conspiracy had been eliminated and that therefore he had been given another chance. The accusations further charged him with conspiring with the Germans and Japanese during his tour of duty as military attaché with Chiang Kai-shek in 1937-38 and with having "sold" the Far Eastern Maritime Province to Japan, and the Ukraine and Belorussia to the Germans. He was allegedly tried by a Soviet court and pardoned on the condition of redeeming himself by service in the Red Army.

At the beginning of the German attack in 1941, it was claimed, he had been captured by the Germans when encircled near Kiev and had rejoined the Soviet Army as a German agent. To explain his stand before Moscow, the official version pointed out that he became fearful and therefore did not carry out the assignment the Germans had given him. In the summer of 1942, however, he reverted to his role as German agent and "sold out" his army at the Volkhov Front.

[FHO (IIId), "Sowjetpropaganda zur Wlassow-Aktion," 18 July 1943 (GMDS, H3/853).]

Needless to say, there is not the slightest evidence that these allegations were based on fact, and there are numerous indications of their falsehood. It is worth recalling that it took the Soviet Government a whole year after Vlasov's capture to make them public. While perhaps some Soviet soldiers believed these "revelations," it is unlikely that they impressed any sizable group of collaborators or civilians on the German side. It is interesting therefore that these charges, though officially released by the Army, were not widely used by the partisans. Partisan propaganda concentrated on Vlasov's activities *after* his capture by the Germans and particularly on his participation in German "crimes."

(2) Leaflet propaganda aimed at members of the ROA and miscellaneous *Osttruppen* did not differ materially from general appeals to collaborators, which would seem to indicate that in this area the Soviet leadership drew no sharp distinction between Vlasov's followers and "ordinary" collaborators. Indeed, no such differentiation was possible since the ROA was what has been called a "phantom army," i.e., an organization existing on paper but not in reality, of battalions spread widely over the area, under German command and without central and effective indigenous direction. Perhaps without realizing how close they came to the truth, the authors of a leaflet attacking Vlasov's claim that the ROA was fighting for the liberation of Russia, argued that the ROA was not Russian but German-led, that the Germans had created it not to liberate but to enslave Russia, and that it was not an army but an assemblage of prisoners amassed through force and deceit. Even this leaflet, however, reflected Soviet fear that a change in German policy was about to give substance to the Vlasov claims.

(3) Some leaflets distributed by the partisans took issue with specific points of the Smolensk Manifesto. The promise to abolish forced labor was countered by a reference to the "right to work" as an inalienable privilege of Soviet citizens, whereas it was the Germans who instituted forced labor—a fact supported by reference to a captured directive by General Zeitzler.

[AOK 18, Ic/AO, "Uebersetzung eines sowj. Flugblattes," 1 June 1943 (GMDS, H3/853).]

To those collaborators who knew of the existence of forced labor camps in the Soviet Union, such an argument could scarcely be convincing, except that it stressed the use of compulsory labor by the Germans, too.

Equally weak were Soviet attempts to ridicule Vlasov's agrarian program. While rumor propaganda insisted that the Soviet Government could abolish the collective farms [See Sect. V, E, 2], printed Soviet and partisan appeals emphasized that the Soviet regime had given the land to the peasantry in perpetuity and that the kolkhoz members had the use of the fruits of their labor. At the same time, such leaflets insisted that Germany aimed at re-establishing large estates, owned and operated by "barons" and German landlords. [See Appendix, Document 46.] The question of popular hostility to the kolkhoz system was ignored.

Soviet and partisan propaganda went to some lengths to disprove Vlasov's claim that he was a patriot working in the interests of his people. His committee was ridiculed as consisting of German puppets; its slogan of "neither bolshevism nor capitalism" was countered by the assertion that Vlasov's Fascist masters were in fact the worst capitalists and exploiters. As for Vlasov's appeal to Russian nationalism, the partisan leaflets replied that actually he was inciting the people to civil war from which only Germany could gain. Perhaps more persuasive than all these arguments was the partisans' insistence that the Reich showed its basic insincerity by failing to establish the ROA in 1941, and by doing so only in 1943, when it was losing the war and needed cannon fodder.

[Heereswesen-Abt. (Abw.) beim Gen.zbV b.OKH, "Propaganda gegen Wlassow [translation of Soviet leaflets], "20 June 1943 (GMDS, H3/853)]

2. Covert Propaganda

There was a pronounced difference between the "official" anti-Vlasov line, as evidenced in articles and leaflets, and the equally official but clandestine rumor propaganda spread by partisans and agents (sometimes without the knowledge of rank-and-file partisans). While the former adopted themes similar to those used against regular military collaborators, the latter utilized themes never formally admitted in the USSR. They were specifically directed at those elements which were known to be anti-Soviet but were considered patriotic. It is likely that only trusted and high-ranking partisan officials participated in this more subtle form of psychological warfare.

The substance of such themes was revealed by a Soviet agent, Semyon Nikolayevich Kapustin, after his capture by the Germans. Kapustin was a Soviet major who was apparently recruited by the NKVD to execute a mission against the Vlasov movement after he had been convicted on the Soviet side of a criminal offense and sentenced to serve a prison term of several years. By accepting this mission, he was told, he could redeem himself and, at the same time, achieve positions of great honor. Kapustin "deserted" to the German side on 24 May 1943 with the mission of "joining" the Vlasov movement, contacting Vlasov as well as others in his entourage, setting up cells to subvert the movement from within, and killing Vlasov. In order to win followers he was authorized by Moscow to use the following themes:

1. Germany wants to enslave, not liberate, the Russian people.

2. The ROA is a German, not a Russian idea, and results from a lack of German manpower.

3. Russian troop concentrations before the German attack had no offensive purposes against Germany or any other country but were intended to forestall German expansion into Turkey and to protect the Dardanelles.

While the first two themes contained nothing novel, the third reflected an awareness of the effectiveness of the German propaganda that dwelt on Soviet offensive intentions, and a perception of the strongly nationalist flavor of the ROA, to whose members such a traditional, imperialist goal as the Straits was presumed to appeal.

4. Soviet Russia has already satisfied many demands of the people by reopening churches, abolishing the Comintern, and discontinuing the commissar system in the Red Army.

Such concessions were made during the war, but they were not presented in overt Soviet propaganda as concessions, because of an understandable reluctance to admit that the Soviet state had found it necessary to barter for the support of her subjects.

5. The war has proved the instability of the Soviet system of an international union of republics. The burden rests entirely on the Great Russian people, all others having failed us. For this reason the republics will be abolished after the war and become merged in one undivided Soviet Russia.

This theme was obviously meant to appeal to the Great Russian nationalist element within the Vlasov movement. It illustrated Soviet willingness to appear as the champion of the non-Russian nationalities or of Great-Russian nationalism as the situation demanded.

6. The political system of the USSR is to undergo important changes after the war.

a. The union republic system will be dissolved.

b. The Communist Party will be reorganized into a people's party, with special emphasis on education and propaganda.

c. Stalin will be replaced as head of state by Andrei Andreyev.

d. Kolkhozes will be dissolved after the war; such a step is not feasible during the war. The choice of Andreyev as the head of a mythical, reformed Soviet State is particularly interesting; he had the reputation of being a rather less doctrinaire member of the Politburo who placed greater emphasis on individual responsibility within the kolkhoz system and allegedly even maintained that it was not the task of the partisans to restore the kolkhozes. After 1948 Andreyev rapidly lost out in a struggle with Khrushchev over agricultural policy, and he no longer occupies a position of real power in the Soviet Union.

[See Sect. VI, L. But even after Khrushchev's rise to supreme power, Andreyev has retained honorific posts in the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet.]

7. Collaborators serving in the Vlasov movement who return voluntarily to the Soviet fold will be well treated, decorated, and given new clothing and a furlough.

This last offer was in line with regular partisan propaganda, except that leave was rarely promised.

8. Russians will correct their own mistakes and do not need the assistance of the Germans.

This, of course, was an admission that there were mistakes to correct, though it was also an appeal to the patriotic spirit of the Russian people not to let foreigners interfere in what the Russians should and could correct by themselves.

[OKH/GenStdH/FHO (Ulf), "Uebersetzung : Gesamtergebnis der Vernehmung des Spions Ssemjon Nikolajewitsch Kapustin," 22 July 1943 (GMDS, H3/853).]

These apt themes were to be spread by Kapustin among Vlasov's men; in addition, he was to recruit other agents within the ROA. To ease his infiltration he had been instructed to write an anti-Soviet article in the German-controlled Russian-language papers, *Zarya* and *Dobrovolets,* using such phrases as the "Jewish-Communist" Soviet state and such devices as attacks on Stalin and the NKVD—all revealing indications of the way Moscow construed German-sponsored propaganda and indigenous areas of vulnerability. Should he accomplish part or all of his mission, he was to return to the Soviet side by October 1943 with the aid of the partisans; after his return he was promised the decoration of Hero of the Soviet Union and promotion to colonel and political officer in the Red Army.

The strange mixture of truth and fiction which Kapustin and others like him were to spread would probably have constituted a fairly effective series of themes. The truth of some of the themes dealing with existing situations was well known, while the promises for the future were safe because they were unverifiable.

Similar rumors were circulated in other areas to combat the Vlasov movement. According to one Vlasovite officer, a former Soviet colonel, Soviet agents and/or partisans around Pskov were

spreading the clandestine theme that "the weapons are now in the hands of the people. The people will dethrone Stalin after the war. One should not forget, however, that the Germans are the most treacherous enemy and must therefore be beaten first. In order not to weaken the fight against the Germans, for the time being we must continue to fight under Stalin's leadership." Such a notion might well have arisen spontaneously. Its exploitation by Soviet agents grew increasingly effective as the populace became disillusioned with the Germans.

Partisan and Soviet propaganda was most convincing when it emphasized German "mistakes" and "crimes" and German military defeats. With such themes as assistance, the partisans could argue that it was not the collaborators, but rather the Red Army and partisans, who were fighting to help the people. When the Soviet forces were again in the ascendant, mention of the Bolshevik Party reappeared, "The Communists [a leaflet now declared] are the friends of the people—unlike the Germans who kill your wife, burn your village. . .. The Communists are concerned about the welfare of the people and want the best for you."

In the last analysis, neither partisan propaganda nor German defeats bore the major responsibility for the failure of the Vlasov movement to grow in strength. Rather, the unwillingness of the Nazi leadership to design a palatable political program, implement it, and utilize it to the utmost in political warfare forced the "Vlasov operation" to grind to a halt. Vlasov himself was shelved, and the use of his name and program was reduced to a minimum after mid-1943. Only after the Germans had, for all practical purposes, lost the war was the Vlasov movement revived in November 1944. By then it was too late even to test its propaganda appeal.

§V. Partisan Propaganda Aimed at the Local Population

A. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of partisan propaganda encounters several basic difficulties. One is the incompleteness of available source material. In view of the paucity of partisan newspaper files and the specific difficulties involved in analyzing the word-of-mouth propaganda reported by German observers and informants, the following discussion restricts itself primarily to leaflet propaganda. The major unknown is the extent to which the leaflets were produced by Soviet Army Groups (Front) Political Administration staffs or by partisan propaganda sections. Wherever possible, a distinction between these various origins has been made.

Another difficulty is that the leaflets gathered by the Germans represent an accidental selection. Quite possibly many Soviet leaflets never became known to them; moreover, most of the leaflets were collected in urban areas, and none was from an area firmly held by the partisans. Naturally the various repeated stages of selection, from the German seizure of leaflets down to the choice of material for this present analysis, prevent any quantitative study, such as line or frequency count, from being meaningfully attempted. However, the recurrence of themes in partisan propaganda is sufficiently striking and uniform to permit some inferences about their content.

B. TARGETS

A large part of partisan propaganda was apparently aimed at no specific segment of the population in the occupied areas. Sometimes no direct address was used in leaflets, especially in short slogans. More frequently, however, appeals opened with such general salutations as "To the Population of the Areas Temporarily Occupied by the German Fascists," or "Brothers and Sisters in the Areas Temporarily Seized by the Enemy!" Units operating more or less permanently in a given area would appeal to the population of that rayon or oblast, often signing in conjunction with the underground Party committee.

At times Bolshevik stereotypes appeared in leaflet addresses, in such formulas as "To the Toiling Population" or "Toilers in Smolensk Oblast!" In the text, there are likewise occasional references to the "toiling intelligentsia." No special significance need be attached to such formulas, except as they indicate the lingering effect of the traditional Soviet outlook, distinguishing the productive elements (workers, peasants, intellectuals) from the "parasites" and, under the occupation, collaborators.

If the area in which the partisans operated was suitable for such work, leaflets were at times addressed to members of a given nationality. In particular, those to Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians were always so designated and were composed in the native language. In the Caucasus, no examples of specific appeals to national groups have been found, except for occasional references to local patriotism, such as Kuban pride and Cossack tradition. In the Ukraine and Belorussia, some leaflets appeared in the local language, some in Russian; it seems that leaflets produced by Army straggler units and Komsomol teams tended more frequently to be in Russian, while those of other partisan units and Party *obkomy* and *raikomy* were both in Russian and in the native tongue. Often such leaflets would begin with salutations like "Belorussians!" or "Sons of the Ukraine!" in a slight attempt to play on national emotions. It was only natural that leaflets in Belorussian or Ukrainian, though otherwise similar to those of Russian printed media, avoided references to specifically Great-Russian national themes and slogans; on the other hand, "all-union" patriotism was in evidence in these leaflets, too.

A number of leaflets, though decidedly a minority, were designed to appeal to specific social and economic groups of the population. In such cases, the contents were adjusted to suit the target, especially if the leaflets could be distributed to a specific group, such as workers in a factory or on a collective farm. Railroad workers, for instance, would receive special exhortations to wreck tracks; workers generally were persuaded that their lot had been far better under the Soviet regime than under German servitude. Most frequent among such group appeals were leaflets to peasants, a logical target, considering the composition of the population in partisan-threatened areas. While the salutation, "Kolkhoz workers," recurs from beginning to end, during the period of appeasement of the population (late 1941—late 1943) leaflets frequently appealed to "peasants," a term generally avoided in Soviet parlance after the early thirties.

[It is possible that at least some such instances reflected a more deep-seated readjustment, since a definite correlation exists between the use of the terms "peasant" and "Russian," and between "kolkhoznik" and "Soviet."]

In contents, appeals to the peasantry differed little from other leaflets, except for their frequent emphasis on agrarian problems, a subject sometimes avoided in leaflets aimed primarily at the urban population.

Only a few leaflets aimed specifically at the intelligentsia. Where such appeals occurred they illustrated better than any others the ability of the particular authors to adapt style and content to the target group. For instance, a leaflet dated October 1942 and addressed "to the intelligentsia of the temporarily occupied rayons of Leningrad Oblast" showed considerable sophistication. Quoting one of Rauschning's books as well as *Mein Kampf,* it stressed the "unique upsurge in science, arts, and literature" under the Soviet regime, with which it contrasted the German destruction of objects of art, museums, and academies. By contrast with German plunder, "Soviet man has obtained unique opportunities for deploying his creative forces. The right to work, the right to leisure, and the right to education, the right to old-age assistance and help for invalids have become inalienable rights of every Soviet man." The purpose of the leaflet was thus to create a feeling of nostalgia among the insecure and largely unemployed intelligentsia in the German-held areas.

Some partisan leaflets appealed specifically to "women," or "Mothers, Wives, and Sisters," playing on their equality in Soviet society, or on the fate of their male kin. Most frequently, leaflets addressed to women contained specific instructions rather than ideological themes, e.g., "Hide all the food from the Germans" or "Don't wash the Germans' laundry!" Numerically, a considerable number of appeals went to "youth." This happened, in part, because of the great need of both partisans and Germans for young men as replacement forces and as laborers; in part, because of the special zeal exhibited by Komsomol groups in propagandizing the population. Moreover, a distinct feeling pervades some leaflets that the younger people were considered more "pure" and less likely to be contaminated by non-Soviet views.

Other target groups in 1941 included Red Army stragglers, who were exhorted to join the partisans; and in 1943-44 civilian evacuees, who were encouraged to defect, being promised that their sufferings would soon be over, and being forewarned of the cruel fate awaiting them in Germany if they followed the retreating troops.

Most partisan leaflets showed little content variation arising from their being addressed to different target groups. However, in a few instances (e.g., the appeal to the intelligentsia cited above, and a few of the leaflets to Ukrainian groups) they exhibited unusual flexibility and sophistication, perhaps thanks to the individual officers responsible for their production.

C. MEDIA

By means of oral and written propaganda and agitation, by publishing underground newspapers and numerous leaflets, by conducting thousands of meetings and lectures among the population, the Party and Komsomol organizations drew everyone capable of bearing arms into the sacred struggle with the usurpers.

[Tsanava, II, 589.]

This is how the official Soviet version summarized the various media used in the partisan psychological warfare campaign. The emphasis on both the written and spoken word corresponds to the broad Soviet concept of "agitation." Sometimes, media were selected according to particular purposes; at other times, the choice of media was determined by the availability of one or the shortage of another. Finally, while the written media could be considered "official" Soviet propaganda, rumors were often utilized to disseminate unorthodox themes.

1. Oral

During the initial stage of the partisan movement, oral communication was virtually the only medium of appeal available to the guerrillas. In many cases, "propaganda" was restricted to individual conversations of pro-Communists with local residents, intended to recruit members or deter collaboration. This rudimentary propaganda was soon succeeded by a more highly developed form of "agitation" that included incitement to active sabotage, calls to disobey German orders, and denunciations of the occupation regime. Furthermore, persuasion occupied a major place in early psychological warfare efforts, particularly in drawing Red Army stragglers and displaced civilians into the partisan movement.

At an early date, as the partisan bands coalesced, individual "talks" were superseded by meetings and "mass agitation." The Shmyrev band, for instance, which operated east of Vitebsk, was reported to have conducted twelve political meetings in July and August 1941. Other groups, moving from village to village in search of food, manpower, and shelter, organized discussions

with local residents, communicating to them the "latest news" on the military situation (as they knew it or wished to pass it on), appealing for support, and where possible issuing orders. The "mass meeting" continued to be the outstanding oral form of partisan psychological warfare to the end of the occupation. It might have taken the form of any one of the following:

a. Lectures

Probably the most highly developed form of partisan agitation was the political rally held under the leadership of trained speakers. To this end, the larger bands provided "agitators" or "propagandists" who organized meetings in areas under partisan control. In 1942, for instance, one partisan brigade sent out twenty-three agitators who made speeches in fifteen communities on the topic: "The Defeat of the German Forces Before Moscow." Komsomol members of partisan units or local territorial organizations also specialized in this type of activity. The topics discussed at such meetings generally ranged from military developments (which were presented to cast a favorable light on Red Army or partisan activities) to German "atrocities" and "barbarism." The primary purpose of the lectures was, in addition to informing the local population about current events, to "encourage tenacity, discipline, and stamina" and to instill "a will to win."

The importance assigned to lectures or speeches within the context of partisan verbal propaganda may be judged by the fact that individual partisans who had mastered the art of public speaking were often detailed from regular combat duty to presenting lectures and conducting meetings. Nevertheless, the number of trained or effective speakers remained small, a handicap that limited the usefulness of this type of oral agitation.

b. Discussions

Closely related to lecture-rallies were the fairly formal "discussions" held with groups of local residents. Such meetings often served to spark definite action on one specific issue. In 1943, for instance, a partisan unit held meetings with peasants to discuss "Order No. 130 of the People's Commissariat for Defense"; other discussions centered on such problems as reaping the harvest. Often at the end of such discussions, resolutions were passed, presumably to formalize decisions and bind the participants to carry them out. Thus the discussions may be regarded as, among other things, apparent democratic processes used to disguise the transmission of specific partisan orders.

[A postwar memoir describes "group participation" in a meeting. Upon opening the discussion, the commander of a partisan unit thanked the peasants for their support and proceeded to describe recent victories of the Red Army and the partisans. Some of the peasants thereupon spoke out against the German robbers (the Soviet account relates) and expressed the people's gratitude for the help the partisans had given during harvesting. At the end of the meeting, a resolution was passed expressing confidence in the Red Army's ability to win under Stalin's leadership. As a result of the meeting, the Soviet author concludes, 20.5 tons of grain were delivered by peasants of four villages to the partisans.]

c. Readings

Because of the shortage of trained lecturers or discussion-group speakers, meetings at which official pronouncements and news bulletins were read aloud by a partisan "reader" played an important part in oral psychological warfare. The partisan equivalent of the old town crier ranked below the "specialist-agitators" and lecturers. The material largely consisted of Soviet war communiqués and such texts as Stalin's wartime speeches. Two further reasons for the

widespread use of the "reading" system apparently were the shortages of copies of news bulletins, and the partisan belief that public readings were more desirable than the distribution of printed appeals, because joining together in a group and watching, rather than reading, produced a greater emotional effect on the peasants.

d. Special Events

In addition to the gatherings outlined above, the partisans staged a variety of other meetings. The formal gatherings included celebrations of national holidays. Speeches, music, and sometimes parades marked May Day celebrations in partisan-held areas. Occasionally, nonverbal devices were used; for instance, forty-five red flags were hoisted on the First of May 1942, with mines attached to them to blow up any Germans or collaborators trying to pull them down. Informal gatherings included village dancing, group singing, amateur shows, and plays. All of these served to glorify the partisan movement and evoke patriotic emotions. Legends of old partisan leaders were a favorite theme of partisan music. Another medium of partisan expression and propaganda was the traditional Russian ditty *(chastushki),* widely used to ridicule the Germans but also to poke fun at partisan life itself.

[See, for instance, the examples in Andreyev, p. 214; Tsanava, I, 221-22; and the strange example in Document 16 of the Appendix to this book.]

The total of these various forms of verbal psychological warfare was impressive. Even if Soviet figures are exaggerated, they give some indication of the magnitude of partisan activities in this field. According to one source the partisans in one rayon had, in 1943, "4 propagandists [including trained writers], 18 agitators [lecturers, speakers, discussion leaders], and 25 readers." According to another postwar account, Komsomol agitators in Vitebsk Oblast serviced 1,700 inhabited points and delivered a total of 14,000 lectures and readings during the occupation. The Kalinin Brigade is said to have conducted a total of 866 lectures; the Kotovsky Brigade, 500 meetings and some 1,000 readings, reaching a total of 10,000 people. The obvious limitation of such oral propaganda was that it could be conducted only in areas that the partisans controlled. In German-held areas, other media had to be adopted, although on occasion the partisans used agents for the dissemination of rumors and slogans even there. [On rumors, see subsection E, below.] On the whole, however, oral communication in German-held areas was more widely employed by the urban undergrounds than by combat partisan bands, which rarely ventured into German-held areas except on combat or intelligence missions.

2. "Action Propaganda"

Mention should be made of what German antipartisan warfare called partisan *Tatpropaganda,* or propaganda by action or "living" evidence. The sum total of partisan behavior inevitably colored the response of the local residents to them. Occasionally it appears that specific modes of behavior were ordered by the partisan command in order to elicit a favorable popular reaction. Thus, according to German reports, some bands were said to have helped the peasants to dissolve the collective farms; in doing so, the partisans declared, "Kolkhozes may not exist after the war, but the Soviet power remains." This type of "action propaganda" was definitely aimed at winning popular support.

In a less spectacular manner, partisan psychological warfare "actions" included helping the peasants with sowing and harvesting; distributing to the population food or supplies captured from the Germans; and repairing churches and shrines, reopening Belorussian schools, and establishing soccer fields—these facts being reported toward the end of the occupation—in an area south of the Baranoviche-Bobruisk highway.

The impact of such "action propaganda" appears to have been considerable. While it was often offset by other, less pleasant, contacts with the partisans, nevertheless it had a good effect, in part because of the contrast with German behavior; news (and often exaggerated rumors) of such partisan actions spread quickly and served to embarrass the German propaganda machine.

3. Printed Media

The production and dissemination of printed media entailed considerable technical difficulties for the partisans [see also above, Sect. I, B] and required a number of trained specialists and technicians. The written word, more than the oral appeal, needed to be carefully chosen as a permanent and more official record of Soviet policy, and hence required greater policy guidance from the Soviet side.

The leaflet was the most widespread and the most important medium of partisan written propaganda. In addition, "straight" news reports, such as war communiqués and speeches, were often disseminated in leaflet form. Distribution took place inside and outside partisan-held areas; in German-controlled towns and villages, leaflets could be left in public places, such as markets or inns, as well as in private homes. Others were left with Germans and collaborators, or even carried to their billets and strongpoints.

Handwritten and printed posters were also employed; these generally contained brief slogans, orders, warnings (such as threats to prospective *Ostarbeiter),* orders not to deliver grain to the Germans, partisan "induction" notices, and appeals to hold out until victory. Other posters were used to intimidate collaborators; thus, German reports speak of posters bearing the names of collaborators working for the Germans, and other posters enumerating collaborators liquidated by the partisans.

Another partisan medium designed specifically for collaborators was the personal, handwritten letter. Generally dispatched through messengers (or occasionally sent through regular postal channels), such letters were addressed to mayors, OD men, and other employees of the Germans, and contained threats of retribution, offers to defect, or orders for sabotage or intelligence assignments.

Compared with leaflet propaganda, partisan newspapers played a secondary role. However, the number of organs was considerable, in part because of a belief in the symbolic value of a rayon newspaper as a token of the re-establishment of Soviet control and orderly conditions. The newspapers were well suited to combine "factual" news of local and international interest (the latter when the editors had access to radio or Soviet news dispatches) with propaganda appeals, editorials, lists of newly decorated partisans and local residents, and articles of a more basic political nature. Moreover, the newspapers, though generally limited to two pages (one sheet), provided a medium for the dissemination of pictorial matter, caricatures, cartoons, and maps. The effectiveness of partisan humor, expressed in cartoons and songs, is frequently mentioned in Soviet postwar accounts. Other illustrative matter, especially in newsprint produced in the latter part of the war and brought in from the Soviet side to the partisans, included pictures of Lenin and Stalin, and occasionally photographs of targets blown up by the partisans, groups of German prisoners captured by the Red Army, or a town recaptured by the Soviet forces.

This account has not considered all the written media employed by the partisans. However, most other material—such as picture postcards, pamphlets, and books—was brought into the occupied area from the Soviet side of the front. As examples, one might point to the collection of Stalin's wartime speeches; a pamphlet of Molotov's diplomatic notes on German atrocities; and the

volume, *Truth About Religion in Russia,* which was symbolic of the change of Soviet tactics toward the Orthodox Church during the war.

4. Theaters and Movies

Amateur theatrical performances were occasionally staged by partisan bands, both for their own entertainment and for the "enlightenment" of the local population. In the latter part of the war, when air contact with the Soviet side was regularized, movies were also used as a psychological warfare medium. There are reports from different sectors behind the Central front in 1943-44 which indicate the use of small movie projectors by the partisans; only one film, "The Fall of Stalingrad" is mentioned by name. By its very nature the use of cinematographic equipment was so difficult in partisan situations as to make the role of movies very minor.

5. Black and Gray Propaganda

The German documentation repeatedly refers to the use of Soviet "black" and "gray" propaganda behind the front. Actually, none of the available examples warrants the conclusion that it was disseminated by the partisans rather than by the Red Army or special agents. Moreover, no actual specimens have been located. There is evidence that the partisans used special devices to make the discovery of their propaganda more difficult. Thus an appeal to the Minsk population in the spring of 1944 appeared on a usual German-produced poster containing a German text and its Belorussian translation. While the German reproduced an authentic Nazi text, the Belorussian "translation" contained a partisan appeal. In this manner, it was intended that the Germans should not discover the real message of the poster until they were tipped off by some collaborator. At the same time, one may assume that the ingenuity of the technique appealed to the readers.

6. Effectiveness of Media

Both written and oral media had their limitations in partisan warfare; oral media could not be used extensively outside partisan-held areas, and printed materials were difficult to produce. Not unnaturally, printed material supplied from the outside (i.e., from the Soviet side) played a considerable role, especially in the second stage of the movement, when the partisans were still insecure and mobile but already had regular contact with the Army fronts.

Evidence on the relative effectiveness of different media is spotty and contradictory. There is some indication that the peasants were generally distrustful of print; it is reported that rumors and oral agitation were more readily believed. On the other hand, German propagandists reported consistently that oral claims and promises were by themselves inadequate to produce any marked effect on the population. The technique of supplementing oral media with printed materials, widespread in partisan propaganda during 1943 to 1944, may have arisen because the partisans realized that the combination was most effective. The written media, though less flexible than the oral, offered proof that partisans were active in the vicinity, and oral agitation reinforced or "explained" and supplemented printed information and slogans.

At the same time, the great hunger for news of any sort made the population comparatively receptive to any type of information, including unconfirmed rumors—a receptivity due in part to German failure to fill the vacuum left when the peacetime Soviet propaganda machine was destroyed. Consequently, within limits, all media may be judged as successful in furthering partisan psychological warfare aims.

D. PARTISAN LEAFLETS: CONTENTS

1. The Initial Period

In the first weeks of war, Soviet propaganda witnessed a survival of traditional Bolshevik and "Marxist" themes, concentrating on appeals to German "workers and peasants" and attempts to stimulate "anti-Hitlerite" revolts in the ranks of the Wehrmacht. This first brief stage, preceding the suppression of militant Communist slogans, was barely felt in partisan propaganda, both because it antedated the formation of most partisan units and because the units existing in June-July 1941 were absorbed in tasks other than the dissemination of Marxist orthodoxy. Nevertheless, leaflet propaganda spread by the Red Army to the population on occupied territory in July 1941 still bore the motto, "Proletarians of the World, Unite" —a slogan soon supplanted by the more universally appealing, "Death to the German Invaders!" which adorned virtually all partisan propaganda from December 1941 on.

[Mekhlis, the Chief of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army, ordered this change to be made in all Red Army printed propaganda material, with the exception of certain appeals to the enemy. (AOK 17, Ic/AO, "Anweisung des Chefs der obersten politischen Verwaltung der RA.," 10 December 1941, GMDS, AOK 17, 16719/18.)]

The partisans' own first appeals, rudimentary in technique and highly limited in distribution, concentrated on simple and brief statements—either declamatory (such as "The Red Army is Fighting for the Freedom of the People") or hortatory (such as "Rally for the Patriotic War!" or "Death to the German Robbers!"). From mid-July 1941 on, however, first Soviet-side and later partisan propaganda turned out a variety of new slogans embodying most of the themes that Soviet psychological warfare attempted to exploit.

The themes generally foreshadowed those used later in the war and are discussed at greater length below. There were strong efforts to identify people and regime in the popular mind, to arouse patriotism and willingness to fight. On the one hand, the appeal was made to Soviet citizens as "brothers and sisters"; on the other, German plans and intentions (real or fictitious) were widely cited to show that "the Fritzes want to make a colony of our country" or "the Prussian and Bavarian landlords are coming." As early as July 1941 such attempts were supplemented with specific references to German practice and examples of Nazi atrocities.

[So far as can be determined, many instances reported in partisan leaflets were correct, if not in detail at least in general tenor, though both the number of victims and some forms of cruelties (such as burning children alive) were apparently exaggerated for psychological warfare purposes. German violations of promises of decent treatment, and abuse and maltreatment of prisoners of war, received considerable attention. Partisan leaflets and newspapers also gave numerous examples of German requisitioning, looting, and confiscation.]

This approach was typified by the following excerpt from a leaflet of a small partisan otryad operating in Minsk Oblast in the late summer of 1941:

For the Belorussian people, 'the new order' means hunger and poverty, jail and gallows, thousands of our youths at forced labor. We have not forgotten how our brothers, prisoners of war, were burned and shot. We witnessed the death of Soviet captives in Minsk, Bobruisk, Slutsk, Baranoviche, and other towns. Before the eyes of the residents of Minsk 3,000 prisoners were cruelly killed in a single night. More than 5,000 prisoners were burned at Logoisky camp in Minsk because a few of them had contracted typhoid fever.

[Tsanava, II, 223. In October 1941 when the Red Army captured a copy of the famous order of Field Marshal von Reichenau (commander of Sixth Army) which, with Hitler's approval,

provided for ruthless annihilation of all actual or potential enemies, the destruction of objects of art and historical monuments whenever "necessary," and in effect sanctioned the starvation of the population, Soviet propaganda disseminated the text (in facsimile with a Russian translation) in the German-held areas. Likewise, echoing propaganda on the Soviet side of the front, the Molotov note of 25 November 1941 to all accredited diplomatic missions concerning German abuse of prisoners of war was distributed in leaflet form on German-held territory.]

The combination of slogans,

The Germans intend to enslave you.
They have begun to implement their program.
The Red Army is fighting the Germans.
The Fatherland and you are in danger.

dictated the conclusion offered by partisan leaflets :

Hate the Germans and avenge their victims!
Join the partisans!
Help the partisans!
Sabotage German efforts!

The themes of revenge, retribution, and hate, widely publicized on the Soviet side of the front, appeared in partisan propaganda as early as July 1941. Sometimes to the accompaniment of strongly worded exhortations, the partisans predicted the doom of the Germans.

Let the ravens eat the eyes of the German scoundrels!
There is only one answer: Death to the cannibals!
They are sowing death, and they shall reap death!
Instead of bread, give them bullets!

The methods to be used were suggested in simple fashion: "The only way out is to unite in partisan otryads and to help the partisans in every possible way. Everyone's duty is to defend, with arms in hand, the grain, the soil, and the independence of our fatherland." It was particularly this change from anti-German attitudes to anti-German actions that received emphasis and reiteration in partisan leaflets. One device was to establish in the reader's mind an identification of partisan and popular interests, and to depict the partisans (or, better yet, individuals among them) as glorious, unselfish heroes. At the same time, an identification of partisans and Red Army foreshadowed future victory, presumably because the palpable weakness of the partisans induced the civilian population to doubt their effectiveness. In these first months of the war, commands to withhold grain or other goods from the Germans, while present in Soviet appeals, were still subordinate to more general exhortations to oppose the Germans and join the partisans.

[This amalgam is well shown in the following leaflet (whose text, although available only from a Soviet postwar source, tallies closely with themes and clusters of slogans found in records captured by the Germans):

The savage hordes of Fascist robbers have temporarily seized parts of our territories, are looting our goods, killing our fathers and sons, raping our wives, sisters, and daughters, destroying our houses.

The war has been on for almost seven weeks. On all fronts the glorious Red Army is offering the Fascist robbers increasing resistance.. .. The best German divisions have been crushed bodily. The Hitlerite plan of lightning warfare has failed.

The bulk of forces of the Red Army rises to destroy the German Fascists.

The mighty Soviet people has risen to defend the fatherland, to fight the Great Fatherland War.

The many thousands of heroic partisans have risen in the enemy's rear areas to help the Red Army. Their glory is spreading all over the country.

The partisans are the doom of the German usurpers. The *bogatyri* [knights of Russian antiquity] of the Soviet soil are giving the enemy no respite by day or night. . . .

For their courage and heroism in fighting the German Fascists, Comrades Bumazhkov and Pavlovsky have been awarded the highest decoration of the country, the title of Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Dear comrades, workers, peasants, toiling intellectuals of Belorussia! At the call of the leader and friend of the Belorussian people, the Great Stalin, arise, like one man, for the holy Fatherland war against the German usurpers, robbers, and murderers! Arise to fight for your dear homeland, for your honor and for freedom! Sons and daughters of Belorussia, organize partisan otryads and groups everywhere

behind the enemy lines; seize the enemy's arms and supplies; give no quarter in destroying the Fascist reptiles by day and night, in open combat or from 'round a corner! ...

Avenge the tears and blood of our dear ones, the desecration of our soil, the outrage to our honor! Take revenge on the enemy, every day and every hour! Starve him, burn him, shoot him, kill him with a hammer! ... Leave him no goods, not one kilogram of bread, nor one liter of fuel!

Comrades, the hour of reckoning has struck. [Muster] all the forces for the struggle with the enemy and his liquidation! Blood for blood, and death for death! . . . Forward to the utter defeat and destruction of the Fascist robbers! [Tsanava, I, 219-20.]]

Several facets of this early propaganda campaign deserve notice. In addition to the frequent, intensive use of emotion-laden expletives, Soviet leaflets abounded in phrases which by reiteration acquired the characteristics of axioms—or so Soviet propaganda intended. Another facet is the reference to high authority; thus the Stalin speeches of 3 July and 7 November 1941 were disseminated perhaps more widely than any other single Soviet document of the war years; and special efforts were made to have nonpolitical individuals who were respected among the population contribute their all to the propaganda effort. In the Ukraine, the national poet Sosyura became head of the propaganda section of the partisan staff; in Belorussia, the well-known poet Yanka Kupala wrote short poems and prose appeals which were distributed by the partisans in leaflet and poster form. These efforts reflected the characteristic emphasis on the national past, traditions, and heroes, which were joined with specifically Soviet themes.

The curious combination, unusual in prewar Soviet domestic propaganda, of references to Stalin and the Soviet leadership along with non-Communists of name and prestige produced an ambiguity which Soviet propaganda was deliberately unwilling to resolve. At a moment of crisis, an appeal was to be made to nationalist as well as to pro-Soviet elements; patriotic Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian emotions were to be enlisted, even while the sense of an all-Soviet

community—political, cultural, and multinational—was exploited to arouse a feeling of strength and devotion. This resort to national themes, apparent early in the war, was perhaps the most striking single new element in partisan propaganda; it corresponded fully to the introduction of the same element in propaganda addressed to the Red Army and the Soviet population.

Another aspect of early partisan propaganda also made some concession to popular feelings, and at the same time, strengthened the theme of prospective Soviet victory. This was the greater emphasis on the West. As early as July and August 1941, Soviet leaflets aimed at the occupied areas reproduced statements made in the United States press expressing the belief that eventually the Red Army would win.

[See, for instance, a report on the Walter Duranty article in *The New York Times,* in *Vesti s sovetskoi rodiny,* 28 August 1941.]

Early in November 1941 a partisan lecturer told a group of peasants that the effects of British and American help would "soon" be felt at the Eastern front. Early in 1942 the Main Political Administration of the Red Army widely disseminated to the population in German-held territory a leaflet form of a speech delivered by Averell Harriman after his return from Moscow. Pursuing the same end of attracting the elements not fully wedded to the Bolshevik cause, the leaflet reproduced a statement by Harriman containing an unmistakable implication for the population in the occupied areas: "We Americans don't want communism in our country—[but] I think that most Americans now clearly see that help to Russia in her struggle against the Nazi invasion does not in any respect change our attitude toward communism."

[*K sovetskomu naseleniyu okkupirovanykh nemtsami oblastei,* n.d. (GMDS, PzAOK 4, 22457/61, Anlage 40)]

This was the essence of Soviet propaganda: to persuade those elements who had doubts about the Communist cause. As a partisan leaflet frankly put it later in the war, the only alternatives were to fight on the Soviet side or to fight against it: "There is no third way."

[Sheverdalkin, p. 244.]

In line with the old Leninist dictum, "He who is not with us, is against us," the partisans' major effort was to polarize public opinion, to arouse the masses from inertia and tacit acceptance of German rule, and to demonstrate that there was no other course than to fight actively either with or against the Germans. The futility of any third course, hinted at in the leaflets, was even more clearly discernible in word-of-mouth propaganda.

Early partisan and Soviet propaganda addressed to the population behind the German lines thus closely corresponded to Red Army and Soviet-side propaganda. No significant thematic distinctions can be drawn at this time between Soviet-to-population and partisan-to-population psychological warfare, except with regard to agriculture (discussed below) and with regard to the citing of local events such as German atrocities, a device which appears to have aided the effectiveness of partisan propaganda. As yet there were few appeals to collaborators to desert to the partisans, largely because of partisan weakness and the difficulty of reaching military collaborators, who were themselves still few in numbers. Though threats were used to deter the people from collaborating, this technique was still decidedly subordinate to others, except in those areas where the partisans had gained a solid foothold. At this stage, the Soviet political machine was apparently aware of partisan weakness and felt that threats were likely either to push the civilian population into the enemy camp or to remain empty words because Soviet and partisan organs were unable to enforce them.

Strikingly enough, virtually all themes later employed in partisan propaganda were apparent in the first six months of the war. After a brief period of uncertainty, a firm line on all major issues was evidently established and kept. As will be shown, only certain German measures, as in agriculture, religion, and military collaboration, wrought some confusion and awkwardness in Soviet counterpropaganda. Thus the factors that distinguish the later stages of partisan propaganda from the early months amount largely to: (1) technical superiority of propaganda media; (2) some greater subtlety in contents, though this is not striking; (3) greater use of persuasive examples and factual details on German and partisan activities; (4) better coverage and more thorough penetration of the occupied area with propaganda.

In the first months of the war partisan propaganda played a distinctly secondary role. If it became a more impressive tool later on, this change was due largely to technical improvements and factors unrelated to partisan psychological warfare. Indeed, probably the change in popular attitudes, above all, created a climate of opinion that made the citizen more receptive to partisan appeals later on. German "errors," both intentional (such as forced labor, liquidations, and failure to satisfy the peasantry) and unintentional (such as the day-to-day behavior of German personnel), contributed mightily to the change of political atmosphere that distinguishes the later part of the campaign from the first months.

In this respect, partisan propaganda was successful in a manner which could not have been predicted by the Soviet regime. As is perhaps true of psychological warfare generally, it failed when the partisans were weakest and succeeded when the population was, for other reasons, inclined to proffer its support. Effectiveness was determined in large measure by factors over which neither partisans nor the Soviet regime had control, i.e., German policy and behavior.

Curiously enough, however, partisan themes even in the summer of 1941 anticipated many of the German "errors." What was then propaganda later became reality. Thus partisan psychological warfare scored its successes in considerable measure because German behavior, obligingly but unwittingly, complied with the clichés which the Soviet propaganda machine had posited in advance. From 1942 on, the line between "propaganda" and "facts" was so blurred that the wildest claims could be regarded as within the realm of the possible.

2. 1942-44

a. Identification Propaganda

(1) Traditional.—Certain appeals and information striving to make the Soviet population identify itself with its government and armed forces, and aiming at their glorification, amounted in essence to a more intense utilization of themes and devices employed in prewar days. Briefly, these included emphasis on the community of Soviet peoples; a *sui generis* Soviet patriotism (as distinguished from Russian or other nationalism); pride in the accomplishments of the Soviet era, ranging from "liberation from the exploitation of man by man" to industrialization and cultural progress; glorification of the wisdom and infallibility of the Soviet leadership; efforts to have the Communist Party recognized as the vanguard of society. All these elements were also to be found in wartime propaganda.

The striking phenomenon, however, is the slurring over of themes specifically Soviet (in the political sense) and Communist in content. "Soviet" is used overwhelmingly as a collective term to identify the regime and people, not as a term laden with values or emotions. Thus "Soviet soil" or "Soviet government" appear in neutral connotations. Likewise, the use of such adjectives as "Red" appears to have been devoid of urgently political content; the hoisting of a red flag by the partisans, naming an otryad "Red Star," or labeling its newspaper "The Red Partisan" were

scarcely means of asserting communism, but were rather making use of terms which had become fully ingrained in Soviet everyday life. Only slightly more significant in terms of Party content was the emphasis on Soviet holidays. The anniversary of Lenin's death (January 21); May Day; International Women's Day; and the anniversary of the October Revolution usually provided occasions for lectures, operations, the issue or reprinting of slogans, and at times for demonstrations and parades, but these were occasions of national rather than political celebration.

Even though references to Stalin continued, they dealt largely with his position as head of the government or of the armed forces, not as the symbol of bolshevism. His picture appeared in various partisan newspapers; his speeches were widely circulated; and his orders were reproduced. Within limits, the same was true of other Soviet leaders such as Molotov and Zhdanov.

Only from the end of 1943 on, when the Soviet command was aware of the new tide of popular support and military predominance, did "Party" and "Bolshevik leader" themes begin to reappear. Thus, in January 1944, partisan leaflets again spoke of the glorious life charted by the great Lenin and "the GREAT GENIUS of mankind, STALIN"; the Soviet theme once again prevailed over the narrower national one, and Komsomol and Communist Party received greater attention.

However, at no time was there any indication in *printed* propaganda of abandoning communism. Partisan units and publications continued to bear the names of Soviet and Communist leaders; the slogan, "Under the banner of Lenin and Stalin," while decidedly secondary to the ubiquitous "Death to the German Occupiers!" never entirely disappeared.

One may well assume that the measure of ambiguity which partisan (like Soviet) propaganda maintained in this field reflected a conscious effort to appeal to non-Bolshevik elements of the population without antagonizing devoted Communists and Komsomol members or admitting former mistakes or failures. This ambiguity was most apparent in the use of the terms "Fatherland," "Patriotism," and "People" (in the sense of nation). The frequent use of slogans like "For the Fatherland *(Za rodinu)"* and "the holy Fatherland War" strongly suggest a digression from the traditional approach, but by implication only. On the surface they continued the trend, already apparent from the late nineteen-thirties, of sanctioning and even playing up "Soviet patriotism."

(2) New Concessions

(a) Nationalism.—Much more pronounced than the traditional references to Soviet patriotism, communism, and Bolshevik leadership was the new, and in its impact crucial, resort to themes of Russian nationalism. Abandoning the ambiguity of Soviet-patriotic vs. Russian-national themes, the policy-makers permitted the dichotomy suddenly to widen, and (judging from virtually all partisan, German, and refugee reports) it was the national theme that proved to have the greatest appeal.

[In this context it is irrelevant to estimate the extent to which the reintroduction of national themes reflected a genuine evolution in the Soviet regime. The clear-cut changes in propaganda themes indicate that, whatever the motivation and rationales of the leaders themselves, the use of national appeals could be turned on and off at will. The effectiveness of the slogans was of course in no sense restricted to the occupied areas and the Red Army. Even in the West the belief that "Stalin has abandoned communism" and "Russia is again conducting a national policy" was widespread. See Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat* (New York: Dutton, 1946). For a

stimulating discussion of the Russian national element, see Frederick C. Barghoorn, "Stalin and the Russian Cultural Heritage," *Review of Politics,* XIV, 4 (April 1952), 178-203.]

At a moment when large segments of the Soviet population were found to be wanting in determination and will to fight to the finish, and when considerable numbers were collaborating with or surrendering to the enemy, the previously diffuse "Soviet patriotism" was extended and crystallized to include "love for the Fatherland," "Mother Russia," "national liberation," and similar concepts. The subsequent effectiveness of these slogans throws an interesting light on the failure of the Soviets to "forge a new man" and of the Germans to pose as the defenders of Russian national interests. Often the distinction between Soviet and Russian (or Ukrainian or Belorussian) patriotism was not clearly drawn—intentionally, one may assume, so as to leave an impression of their identity in the reader's mind.

In the new hierarchy of themes, as they appeared in the occupied areas, the political-ideological elements were usually subordinate to the traditional-national. A typical order of slogans was "For Fatherland, for honor, for freedom, and for Stalin!" Introduced early in the war, the appeal to Russian national emotions and traditions flourished especially in 1942-43. "You are soiling the honor and dignity of the Russian [not Soviet] people!" a partisan leaflet accused collaborators. "Our Russian people were never traitors and will never betray their Fatherland," proclaimed another. Special leaflets and pamphlets glorified the accomplishments of national heroes, from Suvorov to the partisans of 1812 who, like Denis Davydov, fought against the foreign invader. Commenting on German destruction of cultural centers and objects of art, a partisan leaflet proclaimed:

But you cannot destroy the culture or the people who gave humanity such men as Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gorky, Pavlov, Mechnikov, Michurin, and Tsiolkovsky. Seven hundred years ago Alexander Nevsky crushed the ancestors of the Hitlerite bands; a hundred and eighty-two years ago Russian troops entered Berlin, crushing the equally "invincible" armies of Frederick II. The Russian people destroyed the army of Napoleon, who dreamt of putting down Russia. In 1918 the young Red Army crushed the Germans at Narva and Pskov. The defeat of the Hitlerites is inescapable now that the Soviet people in their righteous wrath have risen.

[Sheverdalkin, p. 36.]

In a possible overstatement, German summaries noted as late as October 1943 that partisan propaganda to the population "stressed the struggle for the Fatherland out of national idealism; not a word any more about the Soviet system." The German propaganda machine admitted that it had little with which to counteract Soviet appeals to Russian nationalism. "This nationalist propaganda," another German summary concluded, "is probably the most dangerous weapon we have encountered, for it aims at uniting the Russians without regard to political persuasion, and at kindling the fires of popular revolt."

Unspecified in terms of social groups or ideology, nationalism was the greatest common denominator and perhaps the most effective theme adopted by partisan propaganda during the war.

(b) Non-Russian Nationalism.—Special reference must be made to nationalism in non-Russian areas. While the term "Russia" was widely (and apparently not unsuccessfully) employed even outside Great Russia, Belo-russia and the Ukraine called for somewhat different tactics, to counteract German propaganda catering to separatist, "anti-Muscovite" sentiments of the indigenous ethnic groups, and to win over these groups to a new consciousness of Russian

nationalism. In substance, these efforts were far less straightforward and more awkward. The difficulty consisted in arousing nationalism without fostering anti-Russian, anti-Soviet, or separatist tendencies. The result was (1) silence on the national question in most partisan appeals, even outside the RSFSR; (2) denunciation of German goals as plans for colonizing and enslaving the Ukraine and Belorussia— from which only partisan warfare in alliance with the Red Army could bring salvation; (3) denunciation of anti-Soviet nationalist partisan groups in the Ukraine as German stooges, provocateurs, and criminal terrorists.

At the same time, Soviet partisan psychological warfare could safely eulogize Ukrainian heroes such as Bohdan Khmelnitsky and Taras Shchev-chenko, or invoke the prestige of contemporary Belorussian figures such as Kolas or Kupala. Leaflets appealed to "Belorussians, brothers and sisters!" and insisted above all that only under Soviet rule had the non-Russian nationalities obtained "independence" (as union republics) and an opportunity freely and fully to develop their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. Occasionally this catering to nationalist sentiments went so far as to declare that "only through partisan warfare against the German-Fascist conquerors [can] a free and independent Belorussia [be won]."

Appeals to national groups made more concessions to them than had been usual in prewar propaganda. In this national field, too, partisan slogans generally paralleled Soviet-side developments in propaganda, though it is important to remember that the partisans operated primarily in areas where non-Russian nationalist sentiments were weak.

[This is true, of course, of the areas of the RSFSR which saw any partisan warfare and of most of Belorussia. In the Ukraine, nationalist sentiments were at their strongest in many areas where there were no Soviet partisans. (See John A. Armstrong, *Urkrainian Nationalism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1963]. For an exception, see this book, Chap. X, Sect. III.)]

At the same time, there were obvious limits to the Soviet "concessions" policy; there could be no compromise with the nationalist bands (regardless of their popularity or unpopularity). Soviet denunciations of them were intense; and positive exploitation of assumed nationalist sentiments was limited to such techniques as transmitting appeals from prominent Soviet Ukrainians evacuated to Moscow and Ufa, using historical precedents involving prominent Ukrainian and Belorussian anti-German or pro-Russian "fighters for liberation," and stressing the ethnic background of some of the prominent present-day partisan leaders.

[A special case obtained in the Baltic States (to be discussed in the following paragraphs) and in the newly annexed areas of Belorussia and, to some extent, the Western Ukraine, where "anti-Fascist committees" were established. See Sect. VI, F.]

The Baltic States presented a special case, where no appeal to common traditions with Russia or the Soviet Union could be effective. The Soviet occupation had been too brief, its effect too negative, and communism too unpopular to be used widely in propaganda. Since here nationalist and anti-Russian feelings predominated, as they did not in the Ukraine and Belorussia, Soviet propaganda refrained from attacking them; on the contrary, it sought to outdo them by insisting that only the Red Army could bring the Baltic nationalities genuine freedom. In substance, it sought to revive a tactic which Comintern and Soviet foreign policy had repeatedly adopted in the past: at a moment of weakness, to strive for a coalition with the weaker middle groups against the major foe. All the "bourgeois" and "nationalist" elements, except those actually collaborating with the Germans, were eligible for this sort of popular front. Thus the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet and the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party appealed in a leaflet:

Fight for Latvia's soil, which for centuries has been stained by the sweat and blood of the Latvian people and which time and again German landowners have sought to steal. The Latvian soil belongs, and will belong, to the Latvian people and the Latvian peasants alone. Fight for the preservation of the people's property and struggle for our Latvian culture! . . . ... To all citizens of Latvia! The portentous moment has come when all the forces of the people must be pooled. Join the ranks of the active fighters against the German invaders, without distinction of rank or income!

[Leaflet, no title, undated (GMDS, EAP 99/54).]

In Estonia, Communist partisans and Soviet propaganda resorted to similar appeals. While mentioning the "Estonian Communist Party" and stressing its active role in the "struggle for liberation," leaflets played up Estonia's century-old struggle against the Germans and Teutons. As for the future (a German report summarized the leaflets), "Estonia's return to the Soviet Union would amount to the restitution of 'popular sovereignty' in the form of a Union Republic, whereas the Germans would attempt to Germanize the country."

The effectiveness of such tactics in the Baltic area and the Ukraine cannot be adequately assessed. Elsewhere, the Russian national theme along with the all-Russian (or all-Soviet) one was, however, a clear success; it made converts and antagonized none of the possible supporters of the partisan movement. Equally significant was the fact that no obvious hiatus developed between partisan themes and Soviet-side themes on the national question, nor between propaganda and practice. All reports on "national" reforms in Russia, such as the symbolic reinstitution of officers' epaulettes, the dissolution of the Comintern, and the use of names such as Kutuzov and Suvorov as military symbols, tended to lend credence to partisan claims in this field, an asset which German propaganda could not match.

Some slight use was made of pan-Slav themes in partisan propaganda. They appeared more prominently in media produced on the Soviet side— perhaps an indication that this approach was not a natural one to the partisans. Soviet-side exploitation of them, as shown in leaflets to the occupied areas as early as August 1941, dovetailed with political efforts initiated promptly after the German attack. They were used by the partisans particularly to appeal to Slavic troops fighting on the German side; and in Soviet-produced leaflets in two other connections: the pro-Soviet declarations of Czech and Yugoslav prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, disseminated by the Main Political Administration of the Red Army among the population in the German-held areas; and the frequent references to the rise of partisan warfare among fellow-Slavs, particularly in Serbia. Pan-Slav themes likewise recur in the official Soviet slogans on the occasion of such holidays as the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution; these slogans were distributed in the German-held areas, too. The result of such efforts appears to have been largely to create a feeling of wider community and support, stressing that the Soviet people did not stand alone but had friends and admirers abroad. Mention should be made of the use of this theme in counterpropaganda against the Germans, when the partisans made effective use of the German concept of "Slavic subhumans" to forge a counterconcept of the community of Slavic peoples struggling against the invaders.

(c) Religion.—A more significant and substantial government concession to popular aspirations—and in part, an effort to neutralize German tolerance in this field as well as an acknowledgement of American hints on the desirability of relaxing antireligious activities—was the change in Soviet attitude toward the Orthodox Church. Largely a matter of psychological warfare in the broadest sense, the concessions in this domain were a logical, albeit surprising, reversal of earlier tactics. They were sufficiently important, too, in terms of the response elicited

from the population in the German-held "East," to cause the Germans concern and to induce them to sponsor various (abortive) countermeasures.

The partisan cadres, generally Communist and younger than the rank and file of the population, were themselves apparently not particularly susceptible to religious influences. At the same time, their actions reflected an awareness of the faith which existed among a sizeable segment of the population, largely consisting of older persons and women.

The first partisan written efforts in this field appeared in the spring of 1942. By then Soviet leaflets dropped over the occupied areas were disseminating information indicating the "mobilization" of the Orthodox Church in rallying the population of the Soviet Union, including pastoral letters and appeals by high church dignitaries. Most of the partisan propaganda consisted of references to religious activities in the unoccupied areas. Such references occur repeatedly in the latter half of 1942, but even more frequently in connection with the elevation of the Metropolitan of Moscow to the Patriarchate in the summer of 1943. As for the occupied areas, the partisans hardly mentioned the church problem there, except to counter German propaganda. In particular, they sought to give examples of desecration of churches and German abuse of the clergy. The theme here (as exemplified in a partisan leaflet in November 1943) was: "The German scoundrels yell at every street corner that they are the defenders of faith and religion. Nice defenders who destroy churches and abuse the priests! No, robbers will be robbers!"

Such awkward and somewhat negative propaganda was made even more difficult because a considerable number of the clergy collaborated with the Germans. Hence there were instances where the partisans, too, treated the clergy as "traitors," to the point of killing them and burning their homes. A broadcast to the partisans intercepted by the Germans included the following directive in July 1942: "Traitors are to be watched and if possible liquidated. Death to the traitors! This includes the priests who have made a pact with the new heathens serving the Germans—the same Germans who killed clergy in Lvov with bayonets, who suppress freedom of conscience, and who have destroyed and desecrated the churches of Belorussia!"

Partisan "prochurch" psychological warfare, in line with Soviet efforts, was concentrated largely on nonverbal operations: "action propaganda" rather than leaflets. In numerous instances, the Germans reported that the partisans, regardless of their personal religious convictions (which were usually lukewarm at best), sanctioned or even encouraged the opening of churches in areas under their control, in a transparent but nonetheless successful effort at ingratiating themselves with the local peasantry. In some instances they themselves attended church services. Interesting and typical in this connection are the following excerpts from a report by Exarch Sergius, the Soviet-appointed Metropolitan of the Baltic States, who retained his position under the Germans until his assassination in the spring of 1944. After a tour of the adjacent old-Soviet areas and on the basis of various reports from his subordinates, he wrote in March 1943:

The partisans are conducting clever propaganda to win the sympathy of the population. This propaganda appears to be centrally directed. It assumes that the people are religious and takes this as a fact to which one must adjust. Therefore it avoids everything that may insult religious feelings. Priests and churches are not being attacked; services are not molested, though this would be easy for the partisans to do. . . . The partisans seek to persuade the peasants that Soviet church policy has changed radically; the struggle against the church, it is claimed, was an error pregnant with consequences, and this is now being admitted by the Soviet Government. [In one case] the partisans simply ordered the peasants to attend church; the priest was told that the partisans had addressed the peasants more or less in this manner: "Why don't you go to church? The priest has come on your account to conduct the services. . . . Religion is now free in Russia. The war has changed many things for the better. We [partisans] now have no time for

churchgoing; we have urgent things to do. But all of you, young and old, go to church, and do not forget to pray for Russia."

[Orthodoxe Kirche, Metropolit von Litauen [etc.], "Verhalten der Partisanen gegenueber der Kirche," 19 March 1943 (GMDS, EAP 99/54).]

It is indicative of both the flexibility of partisan propaganda and its subordination to Soviet themes that its Communist leaders readily switched their traditional outlook on the church. At the same time, the awkwardness of some partisan propaganda and the preference of dealing with this matter in other than printed media reflected the novelty of the problem and the extent to which the partisans viewed it as somewhat unorthodox.

(d) Agriculture.—In the fields of nationalism and religion, partisan psychological warfare roughly paralleled efforts aimed at the Soviet population east of the front lines; in agriculture, however, a distinct difference between partisan and Soviet-side themes is apparent. [See also below, Sect. VI, L.]

From the first period of partisan activity to the institution of the German agrarian reform, i.e., from about October 1941 to February 1942, partisan propaganda dealing with agriculture was limited largely to word-of-mouth media. To capitalize on German behavior and procrastination, the partisans in some areas pretended to share popular aspirations to terminate the collective farm system and reproached the Germans for their failure to implement a reform. Their themes in this period may be summarized as follows: (1) The Germans do not intend to give the Soviet peasantry land and freedom. (2) The Germans are bringing back the despised landlords and kulaks. (3) The Germans want our land for themselves. (4) The Germans are not keeping their promises to give the peasants land. (5) There are no free peasants in Germany, either. (6) The Soviet government and the partisans are not fighting for the preservation of the collective farm system; on the contrary, collectives are already being dissolved (or will be dissolved) with the consent of the Soviet regime.

While some of the themes, especially (2), (3), and (5), occasionally appeared in leaflet form, reports of changes under the Soviet appeared only in the form of rumors or occasional oral addresses. [See the discussion of partisan rumors in subsection E, below.]

The German agrarian reform of February 1942 momentarily stunned Soviet psychological warfare. German reports for February and March note a complete absence of partisan reactions to it, and no partisan or Soviet counterleaflets have been found for the two months following its announcement. It may therefore be assumed that the subject was considered to be so important that a policy decision in Moscow was required. Given the limited nature of the reform, however, and the delays in implementing even the small substantive changes in the kolkhoz system pledged in the German decree, the partisans by May 1942 had a good opening for effective counterpropaganda. Indeed, there is every indication that German failure to satisfy popular aspirations in this area contributed substantially to the psychological divorce between conqueror and peasant.

[For a discussion of the agrarian reform, probably exaggerating its significance and scope, see Karl Brandt, *Management of Agriculture and Food in the German-Occupied and Other Areas of Fortress Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), pp. 3-152.]

Soviet and particularly partisan propaganda faced a dilemma, nevertheless, in countering German propaganda. It could either (1) defend the collective farm system as a major accomplishment, contrasting it with the deterioration of conditions under the Germans as the

only alternative; or (2) blame the Germans for maintaining the collectives against the peasants' will, and thus identify the partisans with the aspirations of the rank and file. In substance, Soviet propaganda attempted both, naturally concentrating on the former in printed appeals but also using the latter in verbal media and, to some limited extent, in actual practice in areas under partisan control. Some themes could successfully be employed for both purposes: (1) The Germans are out to restore large landed estates. (2) The Germans are in effect re-establishing serfdom. (3) The peasant is worse off under the Germans than ever before.

Propaganda could likewise insist that German concessions, meaningless as they were, were not at all a measure of German long-range intentions but rather the reflection of Soviet victories at the front and a sign of German weakness. Citing captured German records, Soviet leaflets insisted that, later on, the Germans would tighten the vise even further. Finally, they could argue that from the summer of 1942 on, the Germans were not even carrying out the reform they themselves had promised; thus, regardless of one's estimation of the reform, action showed that German promises and pledges were empty and were broken at will.

Partisan leaflets on agriculture were almost exclusively devoted to countering the effect of German measures. From mid-1942 on, they appeared sporadically, though their numerical dearth in the over-all total of leaflets may indicate that the subject matter offered greater difficulty and the approach was less rewarding than others, to which more attention was paid. Bearing in mind the difference between Soviet oral pronouncements and their actual efforts, we can trace in the following extracts from partisan leaflets the line "officially" adopted—and pursued with some vigor only in the middle of 1942, but dropped almost entirely from 1943 on:

Why have the Fascists introduced this regulation? To make it easier for them to rob you. As soon as the harvest is in, it will be immediately taken away from you and sent to Germany. . . . The Fascists will act according to the following principle: "The work is yours, the product ours." . . . The German robbers want to distribute the land of your kolkhozes not among you, but among the German landowners and holders of large estates.—*Appendix, Document 46.*

The official policy was evidently promulgated in a small brochure published by the Soviet or partisan command in May 1942; its authorship cannot be established, but it must have originated on the Soviet side of the front, though the text was reprinted and the same formulations were later employed by the partisans themselves. Under the title, "The Latest Provocation of the Fascist Robbers: Why the Hitlerites are Conducting a Land Reform," it declared: "The Germans are afraid overtly and forcibly to chase the Russian peasants from their land. They dare not openly tell of their goals: this would anger and arouse the people." The Germans, the pamphlet asserted, wished to abolish the collectives so that the peasantry, now welded into a community, would fall apart and become easy prey for the invader. The brochure was somewhat hard pressed to show why a commune was in principle worse than a collective, except that the tsars had always maintained the commune, and the result was abomination. It went to great lengths to dismiss German promises of private plots as a fake, thus tacitly admitting the effectiveness of the German appeal: "In reality, the Germans have no intention of dividing the land among the Russian peasants." Retracing in detail the reasons why collective sowing, tillage, and feeding under the Soviet system had the advantages of orderliness, mechanization, and rational use, the appeal concluded: "Peasants, don't fall for this ruse; sabotage the German land reform!"

Another leaflet, also in the summer of 1942, sought to combine peasant attachment to the land with patriotism and devotion to Soviet ideals, producing an amalgam of which the following excerpts are typical:

The soil! The word has survived thousands of years. The peasant remembers the feuds over the repartition of strips; he remembers the difficult days of serfdom when the landlords seized the best land. Those were hard years. But even then the land was the dearest thing to the peasant; he always called it the mother-provider. Never was the land so dear and close to the peasantry as after the Great October Revolution. The Soviet power turned over to the peasants 150 million hectares of land. The fields and meadows were given forever to the free use of the kolkhoz peasantry. The happy peasant would go out of the village and scan the yellow fields and say: "All this is mine; all this is ours." . . . Now the Germans have taken the land from the peasants. Like hungry insects they raid our dear fields. All sorts of scoundrels, specially trained in Fascist brothels, have appeared. ... In order to cover up their pillage, the Hitlerite clique has worked out a so-called new agrarian order. What noise they have made over it! The Fascist propagandists say at every corner, "The land to the peasants!" This is a brazen lie. . . . Peasants, the land will not be yours until the Germans are chased from our fatherland.

Certainly these themes dealt fairly cleverly with the difficulties inherent in Soviet methods of solving the agrarian problem. They sought, in substance, to submerge it in the larger issues of German intentions and practices; to erase the distinction between private and collective land ownership ("All this is mine, all this is ours") in the peasant's mind; and to exploit peasant attachment to the soil, without acknowledging the unpopularity of past Soviet practices. Whatever concessions of a more substantial nature were promised by the partisans were restricted to oral media.

(3) Soviet Strength.—With relatively little sophistication, a number of partisan leaflets glowingly described various manifestations of Soviet strength in an obvious effort to instill fear in the recalcitrant, give hope to the loyal but suppressed, and provide a stimulus for action to those desiring to be on the side of the victors. The following brief summary of the major themes is no index to the attention the partisan command paid to the subject, the importance of which can scarcely be overstressed.

(a) Soviet victories.—Though, at a moment of severe setbacks at the front, the theme was launched, "The Fatherland is in danger—defend the Fatherland!" the call to steadfastness in the face of adversity and defeat was rapidly abandoned. From about October 1941 on, the theme of Soviet victories and German defeats never disappeared from partisan reports.

[There was no real exception to this rule, even when, in July 1942, after a series of Soviet reverses in the south, Stalin issued an order impressing on his troops the fact that the recent German successes represented a grave danger to the Soviet Union and that further loss of territory must be prevented at all costs. This order (No. 227) was widely used in the political indoctrination of all combat troops and led to the formation of so-called blocking units to prevent further withdrawals—by force if necessary. At the same time the order contradicted prevailing partisan propaganda, which from the winter of 1941 to 1942 and thereafter insisted that the Red Army was about to reoccupy the territories "temporarily lost to the enemy." So far as is known Order No. 227 was never brought to the attention of the rank-and-file partisans —not only because they could not have retreated anyway, but also because of the impression it might have made on the civilian population and the collaborators. That a real danger of a German victory still existed in 1942 would have been a rash admission for the Soviet authorities to make, when they were still trying to keep or regain the loyalty of the population in the occupied areas.]

It recurred with greater frequency than any other single "factual" theme, perhaps even more often in Soviet-produced than in partisan leaflets. In addition to broad generalities about Soviet advances, much of this propaganda centered on individual victories. The battle for Moscow in December 1941, for instance, provided a subject for extensive exploitation; Soviet directives

specifically ordered discussion of this event in partisan propaganda, and numerous leaflets were geared to it. Likewise, the victory at Stalingrad a year later was widely heralded in partisan leaflets and newspapers. Finally, in the summer of 1943 and again in the summer of 1944 Soviet advances were given detailed attention.

Frequently the accompanying reports gave "statistical" information on the number of enemy soldiers killed, wounded, or captured; the number of tanks, trucks, or planes destroyed; the number of villages or rayons liberated. German casualties were exaggerated without particular scruples (for instance, it was alleged that 6,000 German planes had been destroyed by mid-August 1941), but such exaggeration seems to have become less prominent in the latter part of the war. It seems to have been calculated to (1) destroy the myth of German invincibility, (2) instill hope of "liberation" in those elements who preferred Soviet rule, and (3) arouse fear of Soviet retribution among those who chose to side with the Germans. In substance, it provided a rational basis for partisan activity, which in the initial "shock treatment" about German successes had appeared as perhaps heroic but hardly destined to succeed. Much more reliable were the indications in printed media of the geographic progress of the Red Army, though oral partisan propaganda was frequently inclined to place Soviet troops much farther west than they actually were.

(b) War Communiqués and "Objective" News.—A special category of reports consisted of "factual" and unannotated reproductions of the war communiqués by the Sovinformburo, either printed as leaflets by the Red Army, or printed and distributed by the partisans on the basis of Soviet broadcasts. In particular, the daily *News from the Soviet Fatherland (Vesti s sovetskoi rodiny),* distributed to the population in the German-occupied areas, contained extensive excerpts from these bulletins. The dailies likewise carried other "factual" news, in particular about life in the unoccupied USSR, occasionally about international events, and other items—all selected to raise the morale of pro-Soviet elements, produce an impression of Soviet and Allied strength, and forecast German defeat.

Given the general thirst for information in the occupied territories and the interest in events at and behind the front, these formally "objective" statements, presented without appeals to action, were unquestionably received with avidity by the rank and file.

(c) Partisan successes.—A lesser but still significant number of leaflets sought to play up the achievements of the partisan movement in the eyes of the civilian population. Their themes were, in substance: The partisans are good; the partisans are winning; the partisans are fighting for you. This glorification underwent some changes. In the early period, perhaps until the late spring or summer of 1942, emphasis was placed on individual heroism and martyrdom; the glorification, for instance, of a young Komsomol girl, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, whose death at the hands of the Germans was exploited to the hilt by partisan and Soviet propaganda. On the other hand, when organized partisan action became more successful and provided a factual basis for propaganda reporting, individual accomplishments were subordinated to collective action—the increasing *élan* of the movement and the systematic influx of manpower. At the same time, individual partisan operations were described in detail: "punishing" Germans, "avenging" their cruelties, "rewarding" Soviet patriots and innocent victims, "helping" the peasantry by distributing grain and other supplies. Finally, in the last stages of the war, stress was laid on the theme, "The partisans are smoothing the path for the returning Red Army."

A few specific themes were added to the series of partisan victory reports; these included: (1) Not only the civilian population but also collaborators and Axis troops, such as Slovaks and Hungarians, are joining the partisans. (2) The partisans are constantly among the population, watching the people's behavior. (3) The Soviet Government and people fully appreciate the

sacrifices and accomplishments of the partisans and are rewarding them with decorations, honors, and pledges to be redeemed after the war.

(d) Allied successes.—Both to strengthen the image of German defeat and to produce the impression of a wide, popular, international coalition fighting against the Nazis, a good deal of attention was devoted to events outside the USSR—less than would have been normal in other countries but considerably more than one might have expected from the Soviet authorities. At a time when the Red Army was still hard pressed, shipments of supplies (lend-lease, etc.), friendly pronouncements by Western leaders and journalists, victories on other fronts, and the conclusion of treaties of alliance with the Soviet regime provided a welcome source of relief and comfort for partisan propaganda. Later on, descriptions of Allied bombings of the Reich, landings in North Africa and Sicily, the defection of Italy from the Axis camp, and the prospect of an early opening of an Allied second front in Europe, all helped clarify the image of imminent German doom and underline the fact that the anti-Fascist coalition was not limited to Communists. There is some suggestion that references to Britain and the United States were more prominent in 1941-42 than in 1944, although no conclusive quantitative analysis can be made. If this is true, it would reinforce the impression that, within limits, emphasis on the Western powers was in the nature of a "concession."

Finally, some use was made of information on partisan movements and anti-German revolts in other parts of "Fortress Europe." The Soviet partisans thus became a part of an international community of underdogs, an important element acting in concert with the masses revolting in other countries, all engaged in the same purpose of ousting and downing the foreign invaders.

The basic aims of this campaign stressing the successes of the anti-German forces were (1) to restore the myth of Soviet invincibility or, inversely, shatter the myth of German invincibility; (2) to guide the behavior of the population by predicting the imminent return of the Red Army; (3) to reinforce the conceptual image of the partisans as an integral part of the Soviet armed forces successfully defeating the Germans; (4) to ridicule the Germans even while exposing their cruelties.

There is little doubt that this stage of partisan psychological warfare was at least partially successful in determining popular action.

b. Counterpropaganda

Directly or indirectly, much partisan propaganda was intended to neutralize, or belie, the claims of German propaganda. The partisans endeavored to depict the Germans as liars, deceivers, and breakers of promises, and to dispel German-fostered misconceptions which might have gained credence among some of the population. Within limits, the themes selected for counterpropaganda may be considered as an index to the way in which the partisan propagandists gauged the effectiveness of German themes.

Leaving aside the problem of agriculture, which was recognized as an area of particular Soviet vulnerability, the following were among the major German subjects which evoked partisan counterefforts : (1) Russia is beaten. (2) The Soviet regime is the enemy of the people. (3) Come out of the woods and return to your villages. (4) Join and help the collaborators. (5) The Soviet regime will punish you if you fall into its hands. (6) Germany, not the Soviet regime, is really national and socialist.

These themes were not used with equal insistence by the Germans. Some, such as (1) and (5), could not be used at the same time: the first prevailed in the early months of the war; the fifth

was widespread at the end. All, however, seem to have caused the partisan propaganda machines some concern.

At times, partisan counterefforts limited themselves to such general appeals as "Don't believe the Germans!" or statements contrasting German "lies" with Soviet "truth": "Do not believe the gibberish of the German dogs. Read the truth about the Red Army and life in the Soviet fatherland." At other times, partisan leaflets contrasted German promises and reports with German practices, seeking to show that reality belied German propaganda.

[See Tsanava, II, 52 ff.]

In a broader effort to "expose anti-Soviet slander," such exhortations as the following appeared: "Sometimes the German scoundrels, posing as benefactors, spread sweet words. They need this dirty trick to deceive the toilers. First they conduct propaganda rallies, then they hang the people."

[*Bolshevistskoye Znamya,* no. 9 (21 December 1941). See also Tsanava, I, 53 ff.]

The theme, "Russia is beaten," was difficult to counter during the first months of the war, but thereafter the partisans had little trouble in persuading the population that the war was continuing. Indeed, the Germans themselves soon abandoned this theme.

Far more difficult for the partisans was the neutralizing of German national "socialism" slogans. Used rather infrequently by the Germans, they were nonetheless a sufficient nuisance (if not more) to stimulate repeated efforts by the partisans to demonstrate that only the Soviet Union was genuinely socialist, that Hitler was "a dog of the German capitalists" and that the Krupps were growing rich on the war.

[See, for instance, Sheverdalkin, pp. 203-6.]

No apparent effort was made to discount German propaganda emphasizing that Stalin had allied himself with the "plutocrats and imperialists" of the West.

Partisan propaganda generally made no attempt to counteract German themes of anticommunism; it trod lightly among the problems of appeals to national minorities; and it ignored German slogans on the Soviet labor camps, the activities of the NKVD, the dictatorship of Stalin, and the victims of Soviet policy.

Apparently counterpropaganda was one of the least successful facets of partisan psychological warfare, in part because of its rigidity in reacting to German charges, in part because of the impossibility of disproving certain German allegations without either stating palpable untruths or compromising the Soviet regime.

c. Fission Propaganda

If the common purpose of all themes discussed so far was to establish a bond of identification between Soviet regime, partisans, and civilians, or to re-establish it by rejecting German attempts to disintegrate it, the complement to it consisted of an effort to drive a wedge between the Germans and the indigenous population. In substance, this fission propaganda consisted of two elements: an exposition of German goals and intentions, and detailed accounts of German practices in the occupied territories. Such themes served a number of purposes. Accounts of atrocities and abuses were designed to produce hatred of the enemy and to encourage "revenge,"

while discussions of long-range German goals served to arouse suspicion and apprehension, to counter German propaganda claims, and to re-emphasize the fact that there was no "third way." The choice lay between accepting and helping the Soviet regime or becoming German slaves, exposed indefinitely to brutal and selfish Nazi policies. The propaganda that utilized German atrocities and revealed German goals and policies created the image of the enemy as a cruel, selfish, power-hungry monster, contrasted with the image of the partisan as the righteous avenger and heroic protector of the Russian people.

Such themes apparently resulted from high-level Soviet directives. Thus the Stalingrad Oblast Committee of the Communist Party issued instructions in August 1942 that the population must be stimulated to hate the Germans through a recitation of German atrocities. Earlier, in the spring of 1942, a partisan newspaper agitated that the enemy must be "exposed" in order to make the masses rebellious and to breed hatred.

The technique usually employed in partisan leaflets contrasted Soviet achievements and heroic partisan deeds with German destructiveness and specific German atrocities or oppressive policies. The German plans most frequently outlined in partisan propaganda were: (1) colonization of the USSR and the enslavement of its peoples; (2) exploitation of the natural resources of the USSR; (3) laying waste those regions not slated for colonization; (4) elimination of educational institutions, so as to prepare the Russians for their future role as "German slaves"; (5) assignment of the land to German estate owners and barons.

As proof of these goals, one leaflet issued by a high partisan command on the Soviet side quoted a statement attributed to Hitler: "In order to dominate the Great German Reich and the whole world we [the Germans] must first destroy all Slavic peoples—[Great] Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Belorussians. To reach this goal it is necessary to lie, betray, and kill."

[This quotation amounted to a garbled and slightly "expanded" version of a statement contained in *Mein Kampf,* changed to increase its effectiveness as a partisan theme.]

The same leaflet quoted an order of a German military command which made it mandatory to shoot even at women and children if they were found outside their villages. Another leaflet addressed to the Belorussian population read:

Workers of Belorussia—you must know that it is Hitler's aim to transform Belorussia into a wasteland and to "liberate" the Eastern regions for the German colonizers. ... In Vitebsk Oblast alone more than 40,000 women, old people, and children were shot ... the partisan fight is the fight of the entire Russian population.

Yet another leaflet, issued in 1942, explained German atrocities as the result of German frustrations at the front: "Not being successful at the front, the German bandits are giving vent to their rage by taking revenge on the peaceful civilian population." "In the village of Kholmy, in Smolensk Oblast, Hitlerites seized six girls, 15-17 years of age. These girls were raped, their breasts cut off, their eyes pierced."

Specific incidents of atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Germans were frequently used as pegs for partisan appeals. Such examples, even if they had a factual basis, apparently were presented in an exaggerated form while others were clearly invented.

One atrocity theme which, significantly, the partisans and Soviets did not stress in their psychological warfare was German treatment of the Jews. The hypothesis that the Soviet authorities did not realize the sufferings of the Jews under the German occupation must be

dismissed in view of their excellent intelligence network and occasional references to the problem. It is possible that the theme of anti-Semitism was omitted from propaganda to avoid singling out any one national or religious group as having suffered more than others (and thus perhaps making it feel entitled to future privileges). Moreover, given the Soviet effort to portray life under the occupation as hell, it was scarcely good tactics to reveal differences and gradations in the measure of suffering sustained by the population, and to suggest that non-Jews were not quite so badly off. Another possible explanation lies in the growth of anti-Semitism in the German-occupied areas (and perhaps also on the Soviet side) and in a desire to avoid identifying the Jewish with the Soviet cause, which could lend support to German slogans concerning the Jewishness of the Bolshevik regime.

[See also Solomon M. Schwarz, "The Soviet Partisans and the Jews," *Modern Review* (New York), January 1949, pp. 387-400.]

Another topical theme used frequently in partisan propaganda from 1942 on was the extensive German use of forced labor for work in the Reich—the so-called *Ostarbeiter* program. This labor force provided manpower for German industry, freeing more manpower for military service. At the same time, the program deprived the partisans of a major source of recruits; quite logically, the people taken for *Ostarbeiter* service were those most likely to be physically fit to serve as partisans. On the other hand, the program resulted in a heavy influx into the partisan movement of previously uncommitted or even pro-German elements, who joined to avoid being seized as forced laborers.

Partisan psychological warfare "exposing" the *Ostarbeiter* program was designed primarily to produce fear: fear of their fate for those who might go to Germany, fear for their families who remained behind, and fear for their personal safety should they survive and be returned to Soviet jurisdiction after the war. The future that awaited them was described in gruesome detail: they would be starved, beaten, or killed by the Germans, by epidemics, or by British-American bombs in air raids. "Whoever Goes to Germany Will Perish," is the title of one leaflet addressed to the population of Gomel Oblast; it expounded the theme, "Do not go to Germany, for death awaits you there. Hide in the woods ... go to the partisans. Help the partisans . . . Block the plans of the Hitler bandits to send people to Germany."

Once *Ostarbeiter* were recruited in a systematic fashion, they were forced to wear a special emblem during their term of duty in the Reich. This was widely, and correctly, regarded as a German attempt to brand the Russian as a second-class being, and caused widespread resentment. The partisans were thus provided with an additional theme and opportunity to exploit another German "blunder."

The methods of compulsion used by the Germans were a measure of the people's unwillingness to volunteer for work in Germany. The treatment they received was well known in the occupied territories through a variety of channels. Thousands of men and women jumped off the trains taking them to Germany and found their way to the partisans. Those few who preferred work in the Reich to joining the bands were confronted with partisan threats; handwritten leaflets would proclaim "Death to the families whose sons and daughters have let themselves be recruited for Germany's labor!" In the Bryansk area, the "treacherous" nature of forced labor was emphasized by the partisans' slogan, "Whoever goes to work in Germany raises his hand against his own people."

The forced labor issue was also utilized to sharpen the image of the partisan as the avenger of those who had been wronged and the protector of those who were in danger. Thus, in August 1942 partisan-spread rumors claimed that the heavy rail demolitions carried out during the month

in the Mogilev area were to prevent the Germans from transporting to Germany eighteen-year-olds, drafted for forced labor—a most que'stionable assertion.

The importance that the Soviet authorities attached to the *Ostarbeiter* problem is apparent from the number of leaflets devoted to it. At moments of particularly intensive German roundups, as in the summer of 1943, the question received more emphasis in partisan propaganda than did the most popular theme of Soviet victories and German defeats.

A special effort was made to counter German attempts, during the later stages of the war, to round up the civilian population for evacuation westward. Judging from the intensity of Soviet propaganda dealing with this subject, the Soviet and partisan authorities apparently feared to find the reoccupied areas stripped of their population. Soviet efforts in this field followed the customary pattern of fear vs. hope: fear that those evacuated would meet a horrible fate at German hands and that by consenting to evacuation they would in fact become traitors to the Soviet cause, with the implication of severe punishment; and hope that, by avoiding voluntary or forcible evacuation, they would earn a better life under Soviet rule.

The element of fear played on such emotions as these:

Everyone who flees with the Germans awaits an inevitable doom. Some will starve to death, others will die of Fascist torture, and others by the bullet. **Already thousands of Soviet people who were forcibly driven to Germany have perished of hunger and torture in Fascist slavery. . . . The German cause is hopelessly lost.**

This contrasted with the prospect offered to those who remained (and was intended to offset German efforts to depict a return to Soviet rule as dangerous for those who had lived in the German-occupied areas) :

Stay where you are! You must not be afraid. . . . Nobody thinks of punishing you because you have remained in the areas that were occupied by the Germans. We know that you had no opportunity to retreat with the Red Army. . . . ***The Red Army*** **[and the partisans]** ***will bring you a happy and free life in your own homeland.***

[ERR, Hauptarbeitsgr. Mitte, 27 July 1943 (GMDS, EAP 99/54).]

Apparently this leaflet received wide distribution. It was found near Minsk, far behind the front lines, and bore Ponomarenko's signature. At times other promises were added to induce resistance:

The Germans are spreading rumors that the Soviet Government organs upon their return shoot or recruit as forced labor all people who stayed under the German occupation. This is a German lie. They do this to win the people to their side. The Red Army consists of workers and peasants; they are your husbands and fathers and sons. The Soviet regime is our own regime, and the people's interests are uppermost. Millions of people already freed from the Fascist yoke have received material aid in bread, seeds, cattle, money, and wood. Kolkhozes on liberated soil receive tax exemptions and privileges in delivery quotas.

A German report on partisan propaganda asserted that in October 1943, at the time of the first Soviet offensive on Vitebsk, the partisans even revived the rumor that kolkhozes would be divided in the Soviet Union after the war, in order to prevent peasants from retreating with the Germans.

The alternative to being evacuated was depicted as hiding in the woods or joining the partisans: "The population of villages near the enemy garrisons [a partisan leaflet proclaimed] saves itself from being sent to Germany by living in tents and mudhuts in the forest. .. . We know that it is hard for you to live in the forest, but it is better to suffer privations for a month or two than to face permanent serfdom in Germany."

To judge from German reports, popular resistance to evacuation measures was considerable. However, it would be exceedingly difficult to attribute this to the effectiveness of propaganda-generated promises and fears. Germany was rapidly losing the war, and there was little that could have made the rank-and-file Soviet rural resident desirous of abandoning everything to go to the Reich at that time. In addition, evacuation was in many cases a hazardous undertaking, far from certain to succeed.

The effectiveness of partisan psychological warfare stressing German goals, atrocities, and abuses depended on the ability to make the image of the enemy vivid and meaningful. German policy and behavior in the occupied areas insured the success of such propaganda, even though the specific charges made in partisan leaflets were often invented or at least exaggerated. A peasant whose village had been burned down was not reluctant to believe an account that thousands of other villages had met the same fate. In essence, German behavior conformed to the stereotypes which the partisans spread.

d. Propaganda to Induce Action

The two basic axioms of Soviet propaganda, as examined below, were "We are good; the Germans are bad." The corollary was the appeal, "Therefore, help (or join) us."

It will suffice to list some of the slogans used by the partisans on this subject. They amounted to two main exhortations; first, stop collaboration with the Germans, and second, induce active work against them. The appeal to patriotism and self-interest was coupled with a vague reference to future status. "Where was I when the Soviet people fought?" the fence-sitter was requested to ask himself after the war. The fear of guilt in the eyes of either public opinion or the state was strong enough, the propagandists hoped, to spur the timid and cowardly to action on their side.

Some slogans remained generalized and diffuse. These may be summarized as:

Arise!
Hate!
Avenge!
Kill!
Oust!

and they were supplemented by the customary "Eye for an Eye, Tooth for a Tooth" in numerous variations. Others called for specific action. There were "don'ts" and "do's"—the former to deter collaboration, the latter to produce active support. Among the "don'ts" were:

Don't help the Germans!
No food deliveries to the Germans!
Don't give them a single gram of bread!
No milk for the invaders!
Hide the grain!
Don't pay taxes!

Later on, to these were added specific orders not to respond to the *Os-tarbeiter* program. Threats were likewise used to keep the Belorussian population from responding to the so-called mobilization decrees of the collaborating Belorussian Central Council in the spring of 1944. [On threats and inducements to military collaborators, see above, Sect. IV, A.] Finally, action demonstrating the reality of partisan threats—the destruction of collaborators' houses and their physical extermination—can be considered a form of psychological warfare aimed at deterring the population from collaborating.

The "do's" among partisan slogans ranged from the vague, "Use any means at your disposal to harm the invaders!" and the generalized "Sabotage their efforts!" to the more specific, "Attack troops!" and "Destroy German supply and fuel dumps!" In the early stages of the campaign, when the number of stragglers was considerable, leaflets called on soldiers to "Do your duty and fight!" In line with the major partisan activity, a number of leaflets called on the population to "Destroy railroad tracks and cars!" Finally, and importantly, numerous leaflets included such direct references as:

Join the partisans!
Help the partisans!
Join the Red Army!
Help the Red Army!

At times, these slogans were used in combination. At other times, they appeared singly; not unnaturally there was a preponderance of references to the Red Army in the material dropped from the Soviet side, while the partisans most frequently appealed for help to themselves. This distinction, however, was by no means ironclad, since the partisans frequently sought to depict themselves as a branch of the Soviet armed forces.

e. Clusters of Themes

While the combination of different themes varied, a few typical constellations apparently recurred with considerable regularity. The following two indicate the general pattern of such clusters:

(A)
1. Soviet patriotism.
2. German atrocities.
3. Revenge!
4. Soviet Army advances.
5. Join and help the partisans!

(B)
1. Soviet accomplishments.
2. German aims and practices.
3. The partisans are fighting the Germans.
4. Help beat the Germans!

In general, the leaflets were not distinguished by particular brevity (with the exception of some one-sentence leaflets dating from early 1942 and apparently dropped by the Red Army), and did not hesitate to use several slogans, resorting to frequent repetitions and numerous examples.

E. PARTISAN RUMORS

On the border between the fields of partisan-steered psychological warfare efforts and the autonomous transmission of word-of-mouth communications among the population at large, lies the amorphous area of rumors. Considering the long popular distrust of official news, dating back to the Soviet and even pre-Soviet years, the striking paucity of legitimate news media under the German occupation, and the crisis situation which made the rank-and-file population ready to listen to and transmit news from any source, word-of-mouth reports played a considerable role in the German-occupied areas. Their importance was perhaps further enhanced by the intense Soviet practice of oral "agitation," a practice fully adopted by the partisan movement.

[On partisan "agitation," see Sect. V, C, 1. German reports frequently stressed the population's hunger for news and receptiveness to rumors. Soviet memoirs likewise recognize their importance.

German statements on partisan propaganda distinguished between word-of-mouth and whisper propaganda (*Mundpropaganda* and *Fluesterpropaganda),* the former being the verbal effort, corresponding to the Soviet "agitation," and the latter implying *sub rosa* communication. Unfortunately not all German reporting officers observed these definitions or distinctions.]

The Soviet command and the partisans understood the role that rumors could play. One of the earliest partisan directives permitted the wearing of German uniforms because this would enable the group "to exploit rumors regarding the activity of partisans." Otherwise, no specific directives on partisan rumor-spreading have been located. Soviet memoirs, however, readily acknowledge the use of rumors to inflate the prestige and size of the bands in the popular mind.

[See, for instance, Fyodorov, English ed., p. 297.]

Partisan rumormongering among the civilian population appears to have followed two major lines: (1) of acting as a substitute for, or complement to, other forms of propaganda; (2) of injecting themes and "news" which the Soviet and partisan authorities could not overtly sponsor or publicly acknowledge. A major difficulty in assessing techniques and effectiveness, however, is inherent in the very nature of rumor propaganda. At no time can it be ascertained whether a given rumor picked up by the Germans was actually spread by partisans or merely reflected the repetition, frequently with considerable distortions, of "news" heard or read by other civilians. Even where a clear partisan source can be assumed, it is impossible to judge whether a specific rumor was the result of a conscious effort on the part of the partisan command to spread it among the civilians or (as was often the case) was merely a by-product (not unwelcome to the partisans, to be sure) of the casual conversation of a partisan with a local middleman, a chance contact in a village, or an inquiry by a stranger about the latest war news, details of German atrocities, or other matters of interest. A very substantial part of partisan rumor propaganda must be considered the product of a general, and evidently widespread, desire of the partisans to spread their word anywhere, in any place, among anyone willing (or even unwilling) to listen; another substantial part was the repetition, with natural distortions, of statements made by partisan officers at public meetings and lectures arranged by the partisans for the population.

Especially during the early stages of the movement, when facilities for printed media were inadequate, rumors constituted an easy and convenient means of propaganda. In the words of a partisan leader, "Leaflets are a difficult business, and especially on the move it was difficult to produce them, while oral agitation, personal contact, and talking to people was always possible for us. And what could be more effective than the living word!"

[Dmitrii Medvedev, *Silnye dukhom* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Voennogo Ministerstva Soyuza SSR, 1951), p. 32.]

The evidence suggests that rumors were not merely an outlet for popular attitudes and drives but also a deliberate weapon of psychological warfare employed by the Soviet authorities and, in particular, by the partisans. One obvious advantage of rumors was facility and speed in their production and distribution. Unlike leaflets, they could penetrate areas where no partisans operated; their dissemination was less dangerous than that of leaflets; and their effect was at times greater.

Rumor dissemination was partly in the hands of rank-and-file partisans, partly entrusted to special agitators, often in conjunction with more institutionalized media of psychological warfare.

[The complementary nature of leaflet and rumor propaganda is illustrated by the simultaneous occurrence of rumors calculated to deter peasants from harvesting for fear of partisan reprisals, and Soviet leaflets instructing the partisans to destroy the crops. In other instances, rumors and printed media were distributed on the same subject; at times, one preceded the other.]

In addition, the urban underground, whether in contact with partisans or not, was active in rumor-spreading.

[For instance, a secret Party unit uncovered by the Germans in Kiev in November 1941 had, among other things, engaged in rumor propaganda inciting the population against the occupying forces.]

Finally, special agents sent into the occupied areas at various times had among their tasks the spreading of what the Germans called "tendentious" news reports. The most striking difference between rumor dissemination and other media, however, lies in the fact that non-Soviet elements, even those hostile to the partisans, were unwitting carriers of their propaganda.

One may distinguish between those rumors which, so far as can be determined, were disseminated by the partisans, along lines paralleling printed partisan propaganda, and those which made use of concepts and "news" that were not permitted in printed media.

1. Orthodox Rumors

Among the first, the most widespread were those prognosticating the early defeat of the Germans and the return of the Red Army, and exaggerating the victories and growth of the partisan movement. As has been shown, Soviet propaganda made extensive use of these themes on both sides of the front. In addition, appearing especially at times of crisis at the front, rumors about the ostensible recapture by the Red Army of towns far behind the front were calculated to create confusion and panic among Germans and collaborators.

A major concentration of such rumors, quite naturally, occurred at the time of German defeats before Moscow in December 1941 to January 1942. By early 1942 such rumors, speaking of heavy German casualties and withdrawals, even claiming the Soviet reoccupation of large cities—Smolensk, Kharkov, Kiev, or Odessa—were reported from virtually all parts of the German-held areas.

[At times these reports would give specific details that were calculated to make the "news" more credible, e.g., that only trains evacuating wounded German soldiers were moving on to the Pskov-Krasnogvardeisk railroad.]

Thereafter, the theme, "The Red Army Returns," never disappeared from partisan rumors, much to the concern of the Germans, who repeatedly commented that such rumors intimidated the people so much that they were now, as they were not in the summer of 1941, inclined to help the partisans with food and to abstain from reporting them to the Germans. In some instances, collaborators hearing such rumors were reported to be actually packing their bags to escape apprehension by the Soviet forces.

[For instance, in Minsk in June 1942. Such reports of lightning Soviet advances in the first half of 1942 were based on actual sallies made deep behind the front, by individual Soviet teams and vehicles, through the existing wide gaps, especially in the north-central sector of the front.]

The theme, somewhat less emphasized in the spring and summer of 1942, naturally recurred with greater frequency when the Red Army did indeed win. In early 1944 a partisan source insisted, with some justification, that the "daily growing partisan groups" had effectively established a second front, which sealed in the Germans between the Red Army and the partisans. These partisan-spread rumors were, like other propaganda efforts, most effective when they were based on favorable facts which could be inflated or exaggerated, but not at times of Soviet setbacks.

Special mention should be made of rumors about the alleged landing of British troops near Leningrad to help the Red Army and the considerable aid being furnished to the Soviet forces by the Western Allies. Another category of rumors dovetailed with printed propaganda in discrediting German war aims and stressing the treatment of the civilian population as "white Negroes." From 1942 on, a particular effort was made to depict in the darkest hues the fate awaiting those who responded to the German forced labor drive, which was at times compared with banishment to Siberia under the tsars (and by implication, perhaps, under the Soviet regime); in other instances, rumors claimed that the Germans would use the *Ostarbeiter* as cannon fodder. By contrast, the partisans' own demolition of German transportation facilities was held up as a model effort to save people from being forcibly shipped off to the Reich.

Finally, partisan-spread rumors were at times calculated to deter specific segments of the population from collaborating with the Germans. In the Borisov area, for instance, a rumor in February 1942 stated that the Germans were about to kill all young men. When the Germans began to round up former prisoners of war who had settled among the rural population, another rumor had it that, if apprehended, the prisoners would either be shot or shipped off to Africa. Another rumor spoke of the impending extermination of all invalids, while a third predicted the extermination of all former Communist Party members—in part, to foster defection of collaborators who had admitted Party membership. One may assume that, in all the above instances, the way in which the rumors were presented played on actual information or experiences of the population and tried to use genuine occurrences or rumors of occurrences (such as the killing of Jews, politruks, and others) as starting points for partisan psychological warfare efforts.

There was no obvious limit to the range of rumors spread by the partisans. They sought to utilize local conditions, specific grievances or problems, and to stress the same themes that appeared in printed media, though at times they went further in allegations either of German abuses or Soviet successes and generous acts than written pronouncements dared to do. They sought to arouse hope or fear, or to induce confusion—in substance, the same purposes that printed and more institutionalized word-of-mouth propaganda sought to achieve.

2. Unorthodox Themes

Certain categories of rumors, unlike those discussed above, represented a more substantial deviation from the official line. Inasmuch as they were not duplicated in written propaganda, these themes are of particular interest; precisely because they were not otherwise spread, they appear to have been absorbed and repeated with striking speed and frequency. In all instances for which documentation exists, these rumors were intended to stimulate the identification of Soviet regime and population, to promote the notion that the Soviet government was being reformed to satisfy popular aspirations, and that therefore a return to the Soviet fold would be far less evil than life under the Germans. While the attitude of "let bygones be bygones" was also mirrored in some written partisan appeals (for instance, to military collaborators), and while the basic approach in these rumors constituted merely an extension of the catering operation implicit in the entire "Patriotic War," "people's front," and "nationalist revival" propaganda, rumors could spell out or promise what printed media dared not do.

Some of them dealt with the national character of the war effort and the change of Soviet intentions. Greatly varying from area to area, but recurring, partly because they corresponded to the wishful thinking of at least a large segment of the population, the most powerful statements asserted that "the Soviet regime has changed" or that "a better life" awaited everyone after the war. Perhaps the most striking report, verbalizing many of the notions implicit in other and less specific rumors, was spread in the Bryansk area in January 1943: "The Soviet constitution has been abolished, because riots have occurred. The Soviet Government no longer exists in its previous form. Russian soldiers don't fight any more for the Soviets but for the fatherland and for private property. The Church has been reinstated with its former rights."

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Einzelnachrichten des Ic-Dienstes Ost," 28 October 1942, p.1. (GMDS, 221 ID 29380/3 Anlage 184)]

The partisans went even further—sometimes, one may assume, in accordance with directives from higher up; sometimes, in a sincere expression of their own views and hopes—for they themselves were not only mechanical media for the dissemination of propaganda but also subjects for Soviet indoctrination. The avidity with which such rumors, true or false, were seized upon and repeated testifies to the potency of the themes. In print, however, no such hints were allowed. In a sense, such rumors amounted to an admission that the orthodox Soviet and Communist approach had failed to win over those people who had other aspirations, and in part at least the rumors were calculated to anticipate German changes, particularly with regard to private property and religion.

[While "proreligious" attitudes and rumors cannot be considered strictly an unorthodox psychological warfare device, in view of the genuine relaxation of anti-religious activities on the Soviet side of the front during the war and in view of the partisans' overt behavior in this domain, the population largely perceived it as unorthodox—a natural attitude when they contrasted it with the latest Soviet themes they recalled before the German occupation. Such rumors stressed that "freedom of religion" had been fully re-established in the Soviet Union. According to an Orthodox priest who traveled in the Pskov area in March 1943, **the partisans talk the peasants into believing that Soviet church policy has completely changed; freedom of religious conscience must under all circumstances be recognized; antireligious propaganda has been a grievous mistake, and the Soviet Government now publicly regrets and acknowledges it as such before the nation and before God.** Occasionally the partisans would encourage church attendance by the civilians, promising that it would not be held against them when the Red Army returned; some were reported to have participated in services to pray for the liberation of Russia.]

Most frequent, perhaps, was the idea spread in conversations of partisans with the peasantry that the partisans were not fighting for the restoration of the Soviet regime, as it existed before the war, but for a new order— a theme that recurs with infinite variations.

Many such rumors were clearly an attempt to win the support of non-Communist elements of the population. In practice, some of these partisan rumors must be considered a reflection of the conviction of the individual partisan who had come to believe that things would really change after the war. In conversations with the peasantry he might occasionally go well beyond the measure of sanctioned concessions to the popular view, at times so far as to discount Stalin, at others depicting him as a victim of circumstances who "did not know that the population was suffering so." [Cf. in this connection the word-of-mouth efforts of the agent infiltrated into the Vlasov movement's leadership to produce belief in the existence of a non-Stalinist faction attuned to the wishes of the rank and file, as described in Section IV, C, 2.] Acknowledging that mistakes had been made in the past, such rumors insisted that the Soviet regime would no longer either wish or be able to make them after the war. The unstated implication was that the victorious people-in-arms had, by its victory, won the right to make its voice heard.

Beginning in October 1941, German reports frequently mentioned rumors, attributed to partisans or their underground counterparts in cities, about alleged changes in the Soviet economic system. By far the vast majority of such rumors dealt with the collective farm economy. While some asserted bluntly that the kolkhozes had actually been dissolved in the unoccupied part of the USSR, other rumors merely included promises that private property would be restored, that land would be distributed (without specifically referring to the kolkhozes), that the kolkhozes would be dissolved only after the Germans had been expelled from Soviet territory, or that the peasants would no longer be forced to work the land collectively (implying that, after the war, the peasants might be permitted to withdraw from the kolkhozes). Occasionally other aspects of Soviet economic life were mentioned together with themes on the abolition of kolkhozes, such as promises about the introduction of private trade and the suspension of labor discipline.

There can be no doubt that themes stressing the actual and intended change of the kolkhoz economy had an important effect on peasants in rural areas. Changes in attitudes on account of such rumors were noted as early as October 1941 in the Smolensk area. At that time, the Germans stubbornly refused to make any meaningful concessions, even in their propaganda. Partisan rumors, therefore, fell on fertile soil. After the announcement of the Agrarian Reform in February 1942 partisan propaganda along these lines abated somewhat but quickly resumed in the summer of that year. During this period partisan promises on the agricultural issue were frequently coupled with themes designed to discredit the German reform. As early as December 1941 partisans in the Army Group Center Rear Area stated that the Fascists were merely making empty promises while the Moscow government would actually distribute land. In February 1942, in the same area, a rumor claimed that Stalin was dissolving the kolkhozes in the unoccupied part of the USSR, while private landholdings did not exist in Germany where the peasants had been dispossessed. German peasants, the rumor went, had merely been granted long term (thirty-three-year) leases. Another slogan reported in February 1942 from the Bryansk area, and disseminated concurrently with the promise that the Bolsheviks would distribute land, ran: "It is better to work with a spade or with bare hands on one's own soil, than with tractors on foreign soil." According to the German reporter, that rumor was designed to further the prevailing desire for land ownership among peasants. During 1942 other rumors aiming to discredit German propaganda efforts alleged that the Germans were abolishing the kolkhozes merely because of their difficulties in the occupied area, which, in turn, led them to appease the peasants. In reality, kolkhoz land would later be distributed among German settlers and land-holders. Another rumor asserted that the new German agrarian policy did not conflict with Stalin's views on the subject, because in the unoccupied USSR similar reforms had been introduced.

The frequent combination of partisan agricultural themes with arguments against the German agrarian reform indicates that partisan rumors about actual or intended changes in the kolkhoz economy in the USSR were motivated largely by the desire to combat German propaganda. This assumption is also supported by the fact that, as soon as a majority of peasants realized that German promises were not meant to be carried out on a large scale, partisan rumor propaganda in this field subsided. Nevertheless, the "dissolution of the kolkhozes" should be viewed as part of a larger propaganda effort aimed to mislead the rural population (which was more hostile toward the Soviet regime and therefore more accessible to German propaganda than some other segments of the population) into believing that profound changes in the economic system had been carried out in the unoccupied USSR or would be instituted after the victorious conclusion of the war.

"Unorthodox" themes appeared in partisan-spread rumors as early as October 1941 and extended almost to the end of 1943. Thus they covered precisely the period which has been elsewhere characterized as that of relative Soviet weakness, the months when the regime was prepared to make concessions so as to attract wavering elements by actual or token promises or relaxations of unpopular laws. These rumors, strong in late 1941, subsided somewhat about February 1942, after Soviet victories and after the German agrarian reform, which required some readjustment of partisan themes; but they reappeared with renewed intensity during the late summer and fall of that year. After the victory at Stalingrad was exploited, unorthodox themes declined in frequency. By 1944, with the Red Army, partisans, and concomitant Soviet institutions again in the ascendant, there was little need for such propaganda. At the end of the war, it was abandoned for more direct emphasis on Soviet victory, glory, and promise of rich production, contrasted with German failure, ignominy, and depredation.

3. Effectiveness

It is nearly impossible to assess the influence of partisan-spread rumors on popular attitudes and behavior. Moreover, it is usually futile to attempt to trace the origin and extent of a rumor or to evaluate its effectiveness. Other psychological warfare media, and objective developments, provoked reactions without help from partisan rumors. The analyst is nonetheless struck by the frequently expressed and uniform opinion in German reports that partisan rumors were an exceptionally effective tool of psychological warfare. Likewise, the considerable number of instances in which "rumor-mongers" were severely punished, even hanged, by the Germans bears indirect witness to the effectiveness of rumors.

[It should be borne in mind, however, that a significant number of rumors attributed to the partisans—perhaps the majority—were probably unrelated to them. For purposes of German reporting, it was convenient to claim continued mass support and write off hostile manifestations to "bandits.]

Even the Germans themselves occasionally became victims of partisan rumors. In January 1942, for instance, German agencies arguing for a more extensive agrarian reform referred to an alleged Stalin speech promising the abolition of the kolkhoz system, a speech that repeatedly crops up in rumors but was never actually delivered. In the summer of 1943 German reports, seeking to explain the negative effect of the proclamation of private land holding of 3 June 1943, attributed its failure to rumors of prior land distribution by the partisans, in terms vastly exaggerating actual partisan practices but corresponding to allegations contained in the rumors.

Their effectiveness was subject to variation and fluctuation. The available material contains no conclusive data on the vulnerability of different social strata to rumor propaganda.

[For some hypotheses applicable, within limits, to the occupation situation, see Raymond A. Bauer and David B. Gleicher, *Word-of-Mouth Communication in the Soviet Union* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: HRRI, 1953).]

Nor can definitive statements be made about the geographic variation in rumor effectiveness. Most clearly, a rumor did not necessarily become more effective as more people heard it and passed it on, or as other rumors were added to it. A single rumor was at times sufficient to produce panic, fear, or hope, if other conditions were favorable. Rumors appear to have been launched with the greatest measure of success when objective conditions made them believable, and when they were used in actual crisis situations.

Rumors of Soviet successes do not seem to have been widely believed in 1941 until the Red Army actually stopped the Germans near the end of the year. At a moment when the myth of German invincibility was still generally treated as fact, partisan rumors usually fell on deaf ears. Rumors of Red Army advances caused panic in Nevel and Polotsk, forcing the Germans to take summary measures to stop a mass exodus, and producing friction between rulers and ruled. Rumors of the impending evacuation of the Crimea in September 1943 caused collaborators to pack their bags, a development which was in turn exploited by further rumors. In both cases, an actual crisis situation existed to make the partisan rumors believable.

The effectiveness of partisan-spread rumors was also enhanced by German policy. Not only did German abuses and atrocities in general create an atmosphere in which otherwise fantastic rumors were readily accepted as facts, but German failure to engage in systematic and subtle counter-propaganda virtually allowed partisan rumors free rein. The Germans decided not to respond directly to partisan rumors about "Stalin's promise" (fictitious though it was) to dissolve collective farms in the future, because, according to the reasoning of the Wehrmacht Propaganda office, recognizing it officially would help to disseminate it more widely, in particular among the Red Army. In another case, the suggestion of a German security division that some residents be taken from Bobruisk to Smolensk, to demonstrate the baselessness of partisan rumors claiming that the Soviets had recaptured Smolensk, was not carried out.

A vital asset of partisan rumors was the speed with which they could react to local situations. Their greatest effect lay perhaps in helping to crystallize popular hopes for a better life after the war. While exaggerated reports of Red Army advances became less believable after having been proved wrong time after time, the actual "appeasement policy" of the Soviet government toward its own population seemed to support the Soviet and partisan themes of more far-reaching changes—present or future—in the USSR. By appealing to such hopes the partisans gauged popular sentiments far more correctly than the Germans did.

F. PARTISAN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE: CONCLUSIONS

From the very start, the Soviet partisan movement was expected to achieve political and psychological warfare purposes. According to the general outlook and early practice of the Soviet leaders, such activity would be considered a natural function of any organization. On the one hand, propaganda was to be an additional tool in the struggle against the Germans; on the other, and far more important in terms of political goals, it would assist in the maintenance or recapture of popular allegiance behind the German lines, a primary task of the partisan movement and the political apparatus of Party and Komsomol cells operating generally in conjunction with it. While it is futile to assess the relative importance of the political and propaganda tasks in comparison with the paramilitary and economic functions of the partisans, there can be no doubt that the former remained significant to the very end.

Considering the complex and effective Soviet control mechanism over the partisan movement, it is scarcely surprising that the choice and use of psychological warfare techniques, media, and themes, once contact with Soviet organs was established or re-established, took place in strict accordance with official Soviet rules. Though there may have been examples of individual partisans or officers engaging in propaganda on their own initiative, in an informal manner, along lines not officially sanctioned, the institutionalized psychological warfare operations of the partisans hardly ever deviated from the framework imposed from the Soviet side. In this sense, Soviet controls imposed some rigidity on propaganda activities. In general, the range of variations in official partisan propaganda was relatively small, and there was almost no spontaneity in introducing new and otherwise "unorthodox" themes.

It would appear, however, that these tendencies toward rigidity were all but counteracted by a remarkable flexibility in the official adaptation of proaganda slogans and themes to the specific wartime conditions in which the partisans operated. This is most strikingly exemplified in the "concessions" policy introduced after the first weeks of war (during which the traditional prewar pattern was maintained). From the late summer of 1941 on to nearly the end of the occupation—with obvious and not inconsiderable variations—partisan propaganda passed over Communist, ideological, and class themes in favor of strong emphasis on patriotism and popular-front slogans. To this extent, partisan and Soviet-side propaganda were fully in step during the war. The significant differences between the two may be summarized as follows :

(1) Partisan psychological warfare, operating in a more critical environment than Soviet-side propaganda, was likely to go further, at least in promises, in meeting popular aspirations in such crucial areas as agriculture.

(2) In the face of German propaganda operations, it could not combat certain enemy moves by ignoring them; in particular, although Soviet propaganda to the civilian population never responded to the German army's widespread publicity for the Vlasov movement, partisan propaganda was constrained to take issue.

(3) At the same time, the limits of the "concessions" tactics were clearly defined. Not even for propaganda purposes were themes or slogans permitted that specified Soviet errors in the past or suggested a criticism of the Soviet leadership. Only in oral propaganda, never in printed media, were statements made (at times with official sanction, often undoubtedly without it) about the fact that the Soviet regime constituted the lesser of two evils; that the German attack demanded a *Burgfrieden,* or temporary composition of internal differences in the face of the greater external foe; and that the Moscow government would in the future mend its ways.

Thus both the concessions policy itself and its limits were defined by the Soviet understanding of vulnerability in rank-and-file loyalty at times of stress—a vulnerability that had become amply apparent during the initial stage of the German-Soviet war. In fact, the Soviet response to certain German propaganda themes was a measure of Moscow's estimate of this vulnerability, particularly in such areas as agriculture, religion, and national non-Bolshevik political activity; obversely, the failure of the Soviet regime to adopt or tolerate other German-inspired themes on their own side, such as anti-Semitism, indicates either a feeling that German use of this theme did not constitute a kinetic propaganda threat, or else that its use on the Soviet (and partisan) side would itself expose an area of vulnerability.

Another reflection of the Soviet and partisan command's own perception of possible disloyalty was the rapid abandonment of the propaganda line initially adopted in 1941 and stressing the extreme danger to the Fatherland. The line was promptly replaced in partisan propaganda by the (highly premature and exaggerated) argument, "we are the stronger and therefore we shall win."

With some variations, this theme, nicely balanced with the "concession" policy, remained essentially static until 1943-44. Only in the last months of the German occupation, as Soviet strength objectively increased and was subjectively recognized as superior to the German, were certain elements of "concession" abandoned, while others (such as patriotism and religious tolerance) survived, even into the postwar period.

The other major line in Soviet propaganda was the "exposure" of German aims and practices. At first more stress was laid on Nazi colonial ambitions; later, as the population's practical experience of actual German behavior grew, the partisans were supplied with plentiful examples of atrocities and abuse to be thoroughly exploited in partisan propaganda. Perhaps paradoxically, it was this potent line that the partisans had least influence in starting; although German atrocities were a vital cause in the change of popular allegiances and fell into a pattern predicted by Soviet and partisan propaganda, the depth of their cruelty and their ubiquitous occurrence constituted, as it were, a windfall unforeseeable by the partisan propaganda officers themselves.

Indeed, in assessing the effectiveness of partisan propaganda, these German practices must be considered decisive. During the first months, there was a good deal of conscious untruth in partisan leaflets, particularly in exaggerating German casualties and even atrocities. While, later on, the same lack of scruples permitted Soviet propaganda to distort or lie whenever convenient or expedient, the objective need for lies decreased as German practices provided the partisans with genuine source material. Thus, in the popular conception, other criteria for choosing between, or being influenced by, the two competing systems became less important than this significant difference between them: the gap between propaganda and reality was far smaller on the partisan side than on the German; where it was large, it was least susceptible to verification by the population, since it occurred either in promises of future benefit, or in statements about events outside the occupied territories.

At the same time the partisans, unlike the Germans, were able to emphasize the accuracy of their statements and predictions by enforcing their threats. Fear of the partisans (as of the Germans) was most effective in compelling merely overt compliance and assistance without necessarily producing deeper loyalties; nevertheless, the image of partisan strength was certainly intensified by terror measures. Of those used by the two regimes, partisan terror perhaps had a somewhat less devastating effect on general popular judgment because the partisan commands were more selective in their use of it. For them it remained not an end in itself but a means. Its use, though extreme in its violence, did not blind the partisan leaders to the realization—not shared by the Germans—that the only basis for success was widespread popular support, to be won by the most effective combination of strength and concessions backed up by action.

After threats, more positive inducements were needed to maintain popular allegiance when the partisans had, for instance, departed from a village they had "visited" (or raided). So partisan, as well as Soviet, propaganda generally coupled threats with promises. The carrot-and-stick combination, however, seems not only to have been used less subtly by the partisans but also, in comparison with the technique in Soviet-side leaflets, to have concentrated more often on threats and the use of force than on "temptations"—an attitude probably induced by the very nature of partisan existence and activity. At the same time, the partisans' appeals to military collaborators with the German army, though naturally reflecting a decision made at a high level on the Soviet side of the front, showed the partisans' ability to employ systematic and far-reaching "temptation" themes and devices when they were deemed essential.

Given the situation in which, during the early months of the war, a large part of the population in the German-occupied areas was not firmly wedded either to the Soviet or to the German cause, the task of the partisans may be summarized as (1) to deter people from collaboration and (2) to

win the mass of neutrals, fence-sitters, and seekers of a third way to their own side. Everything else being equal, the stronger side tended to command more popular support; so that as soon as the partisans represented a real force and when they almost continuously gained in influence, the odds were in their favor. Moreover, they had obvious advantages over the Germans in that they were indigenous people speaking the native language, and sometimes were even personally known to the local inhabitants. Finally, the experience of the occupation period was fresher and deeper in impact than the more diffuse and remote recollection of prewar Soviet frustrations; the effect of German behavior and treatment overshadowed, to some extent, the anti-Soviet proclivities latent in 1941, especially since these lessened under the influence of Soviet and partisan "concession" propaganda.

To evaluate the effect of partisan psychological warfare is difficult and hazardous. There can be little doubt that, even in the absence of the partisans, strong anti-German feelings developed—for instance, in large parts of the Ukraine. If anything, the growing acceptance of the partisans by the population was a consequence, rather than a cause, of anti-German sentiments. Likewise, where pro-Soviet feeling was least strengthened by German measures (as in the Caucasus), the partisans won decidedly less popular support. Yet, undeniably, in their areas of operation, partisan psychological warfare played a significant part in determining the allegiance and behavior of the civilian population. Above all, the very presence and activity of the partisans undermined German attempts at "pacification" and weakened faith in German victory; it emphasized the continued presence of "Big Brother's watchful eye"; and, quite apart from military operations, it unnerved Germans and collaborators alike and helped align the rural population on the partisans' side. Soviet awareness of this fact is shown in the assignments given to the various raiding bands in 1942-43, in which the psychological impact on the indigenous peasantry was unquestionably significant.

In the areas where the partisans remained, their presence was substantially important in offering those who had turned against the Germans an opportunity to translate their hate or sense of duty or revenge into action. If, in the sum total of factors explaining the alienation of the population (or at least overwhelming segments of it) from the German side, partisan activities played only a minor role, their existence helped to crystallize choice and channel action for those who had made the decision. In this light, the generalized psychological effect of the partisan movement as a whole on the population in the occupied areas must be viewed as far more important than the specific propaganda techniques, devices, and themes employed by particular partisans. These merely helped by giving rationales, basic ideas, and easy and effective slogans for converting anti-German resentment into patriotism, and righteous wrath into a holy war. However, from constant exposure to indoctrination, the Soviet population was so deeply inured to propaganda, so skeptical of and relatively insensitive to the printed word, that verbal media in partisan propaganda had considerably less influence on the course of the war than did the general psychological warfare effects of the continued existence of the partisans, and of their ability to follow up and translate into action many of their verbal statements. These efforts, though surely not decisive, were significant and lasting, for, with crucial though unwitting German assistance, they re-established the loyalty to the Soviet cause of a latently disaffected population.

§VI. The Partisans as the Long Arm of the Soviet Regime

A. INTRODUCTION

As has been suggested earlier, the Soviet government viewed the partisan movement as its "long arm," which would fulfill a variety of functions—military, economic, intelligence, political—that were at least theoretically in accordance with the purposes and tactics of the regime. This section attempts to summarize one part of such functions that was the natural corollary of the techniques

and efforts previously discussed: the reimposition of Soviet institutions and policies in areas controlled by the partisans. [The question of the extent to which the partisans operated as a military adjunct of the Soviet authorities is not considered here. The intelligence aspects of partisan activities are discussed in Chapter V.]

The difficulty in analyzing partisan policy is largely created by the fragmentary nature of the available material. It was inevitable that the Germans were least informed about areas thoroughly controlled by the partisans, and Soviet accounts are generally reticent about all but the most orthodox partisan administrative and policy measures. Moreover, the variation of administrative practices appears to have been great. Finally, both organically and subjectively, Germans and partisans at times had difficulty in distinguishing between narrowly utilitarian measures adopted in areas temporarily controlled by the partisans, and policies intended to revive a more permanent institutional framework. In villages temporarily "liberated" from German rule, partisan administration was likely to be adapted to psychological warfare considerations and to the partisans' immediate needs. Often the first decrees would include, in addition to the securing of peace and order, such dramatic steps as the convocation of a political rally, the arrest or liquidation of prominent collaborators, the return of property seized by collaborators, and, on the other hand, the requisition of billets, the commandeering of vehicles and horses, the seizure of food, the selection of informants, and the recruitment of men for the bands. Thus two aims were generally pursued: to impress the population with the strength and good will of the partisans, an impression presumably intended to linger after the visitors departed; and to obtain such goods and services as the partisans could find.

The situation was substantially different in areas that the partisans held for a protracted period of time.

[Occasionally such an area was clearly distinguishable from neighboring villages as a result of partisan orders forbidding the residents to leave, and establishing a network of guards around it—or even burning down villages around its fringes.]

Here the goals, in addition to the control of resources and manpower, included the re-establishment of Soviet authority and institutions, not only as a psychological warfare measure intended to impress on everyone the existence of Soviet power, but also as an administrative technique in dealing with the objective problems of directing the activities of local authority and population.

Some institutions and functions ubiquitous in the Soviet Union—for instance, the activities of the *Gosplan* and other economic agencies—were unsuitable or unnecessary in the partisan areas. Others, such as the draft of manpower, were adapted and improvised to suit local needs. Still others, like the local soviets, were revived as phantom tokens of rigid Soviet controls.

B. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Though varying considerably, organs of local government appear to have conformed to four distinct patterns. All of these were in small and predominantly rural areas.

[The partisans rarely controlled urban areas. An exception, the town of Doro-gobuzh, was under partisan rule from 15 February to 7 June 1942. A system of municipal government was re-established; so were the NKVD, a rayon military commissariat, a rayon militia, and a rayon Party committee. (See Chap. VII, Sect. IV, A.) The situation here may have been exceptional, however, in that military control and direction rested to a great extent with regular Army units under General Belov rather than with the usual type of partisan units. The more complete

administrative and political network reintroduced here may, therefore, have reflected not only the urban but also the military-governmental character of the situation.]

(1) In some instances, the partisans did not establish local government. In its place the commander or commissar of a unit gave orders directly to the population and posted such announcements as the partisan unit desired to make. This appears to have been the arrangement when there was no initial assurance that the partisans would remain in the area; though at times this pattern was transformed into one of the types discussed below.

(2) In other cases, the partisan commander or commissar would appoint one of his officers as a commandant (or assume the position himself) of a given village or group of villages. The commandant, himself a partisan, was directly under the staff of the partisan unit and subject to its orders. His "rights and duties" are described in detail in a partisan order whose date and place of origin are unfortunately not identifiable. They included the accounting of cattle, grain, foodstuffs, and means of transportation; police functions such as surveillance of movements of nonresidents, organization of local guards, and prevention of plundering; secret police activities ("to know the attitude of everyone"), and the transmission of "all information brought to his attention" to both the partisan unit's staff and its Special Section; the billeting of partisans, and the distribution of food and fodder to the unit. In short, his were the typical functions of a Soviet military government officer concerned primarily with the assurance of material supplies and services to the partisans and with the preservation of law and order.

[See Linkov, p. 373; also this book, Chap. VII, Sect. IV, A; and Appendix, Document 44.]

It appears that this type of administration prevailed in areas where temporary partisan control was envisioned.

(3) There are instances of the appointment of civil officials to form a new local government. After ousting the German-appointed local officials the partisans would select a new mayor, starosta (the German reports speak of "village elders"—one to a village—though perhaps they were chairmen of collective farms), or other local administrators, whose functions were similar to those described above. Examples of such appointments come from widely different areas and dates. It would seem that in all instances, however, villages so administered were those where partisans were not permanently billeted and where they perhaps made only periodic calls. So far as the partisans were concerned, one of the most important tasks of their civilian appointees was supervision of agricultural activities and collection of grain for the partisans.

(4) A peculiar three-man board, or troika, was occasionally established as an organ of government. The fragmentary evidence suggests that these troikas constituted an executive nucleus combining partisan sponsorship with Party, State, and NKVD functions. They were in existence in several areas of Leningrad Oblast before the end of 1941, where they continued (unless the Germans were able to uproot them) until 1944; a few German reports also speak of troikas in other parts of occupied territory.

[There is no indication that the troikas were used anywhere else as systematically as in the Leningrad area, where the organization of partisans and underground differed from that in remaining areas in several significant respects. It is also possible that troikas used elsewhere had less sweeping functions than had those in the north. Thus the first Order of the Day issued by Fyodorov on 30 October 1941 provided for the "confirmation of an Extraordinary Commission of Three, consisting of [x, y, z] for the prosecution and punishment of traitors to the Motherland." (Fyodorov, English ed., p. 161.) In Cherven Rayon the partisans appealed in mid-1943 to the population to elect a "three-man commission in every locality" to supervise the

changes in agricultural relations necessitated by the war. In such cases, one suspects, the three-man team was a convenient device for supervision and control, rather than an organ of government.]

Evidently some confusion existed about the formal character of the troikas. It seems most correct to describe them as being established by the partisans as the smallest unit representing the various branches of Soviet and Party power. An order issued to a local official by a troika during a raid near Novaya Russa in December 1941 was signed: "By decision of the Rayon Troika: Chairman of the Rayon Troika, N. Alexeyev, Secretary of the Molvotitsy Rayon Executive Committee of the Communist Party» (of Bolsheviks)."

[Sdf. von Minden [no title], 27 December 1941 (GMDS, II AK 33947/7). The rayon "executive committee" was either (1) a confusion of terms, or (2) a smaller body than the *raikom,* left behind as an underground organ; or (3) the executive committee of the soviet, rather than the Party. There are no peacetime Party *rai-ispolkomy.* The accompanying German documents state that Alexeyev had been second secretary of the Party in this area.]

The most detailed information is contained in a unique ten-page report sent by the troika which operated in Dedovichi Rayon (south of Dno, in Leningrad Oblast) for the period from November 1941 (when the troika was established) to July 1942.

[A German translation appears in Korueck 584, "Uebersetzung. Rechenschaftsbericht der Troika, aufgefunden bei der Kampfgruppe Nord," 28 September 1942 (GMDS, X AK 44431/48).]

The report states that, after the first months of the occupation, during which the population was evidently willing to collaborate with the Germans, by October (of 1941) "the situation had changed so much in our favor that the formation of a troika and the re-establishment of Soviet authority could be considered." In early November, the troika was formed "by order of the [partisan] Brigade." It consisted of a former official of the "civil administration of Dedovichi" (perhaps an inexact German translation) as chairman; a woman (who had worked in the Party *raikom)* as delegate for Party affairs; and a former police official from Dedovichi as delegate for "special tasks" (in substance the equivalent of NKVD work). Thus each represented one branch— State, Party, and NKVD. In addition, the troika had individuals assigned to such special subjects as agriculture, food, propaganda; a secretary of the troika; and the commander of a special partisan detachment assigned to the troika, presumably as a guard.

The same report outlines the tasks of the troika:

1. ... A broad propaganda program of mass indoctrination and recruitment among civilians;

2. The re-establishment of all Soviet organs of government;

3. The re-establishment of all kolkhoz institutions dissolved by the Germans;

4. Abolition of all German measures;

5. Organized help of every kind by the population for the partisans;

6. Death to all traitors.

The team promptly set out to accomplish these tasks, although German antipartisan operations impeded their fulfillment. Allowing for considerable exaggerations in its report to higher Soviet-

side headquarters, it is clear that the partisan government was successful in commanding the obedience of a large part of the rayon's residents and, except near highways, strongpoints, and state farms where Germans were stationed, in carrying out the sowing of grain, the removal of collaborators, and the propagandizing of the population that had been among its basic assignments.

By the summer of 1942 at least three other rayons in the neighborhood also had troikas, whose tasks were presumably similar; some of their activity was retributive (liquidation of collaborators), some economic. According to Soviet postwar accounts, troikas existed in the same vicinity in December 1943 to January 1944, when the partisans controlled more sizable territory. The account—in this instance, an article published in the partisan newspaper of the Dno *raikom*—contains an appeal of the Dno Party *raikom* and "its" Organizational Troika.

[*Dnovets,* New Series, no. 1, 10 January 1944.]

The text suggests that the troika was intended to be an organ distinct from the Party committee, presumably occupied largely with administrative and economic functions, but that, in name at least, its activities were either subject to or closely coordinated with Party directives. On 30 December 1943, according to the newspaper of the Fifth Leningrad Partisan Brigade, a conference was held of "representatives of the people's power." One of the speakers began, "As plenipotentiary of the troika of N village, I have been responsible for the organization of forest camps for the people ... a bakery, a public bath." Thus the troikas operated not only on a rayon basis but also within individual villages. More generally, however, the troikas sought to re-establish organs of local government in each locality under their control.

The above material confirms the impression that there were often no clear-cut distinctions between civil and military partisan activities, nor between partisan, Party, and State roles in the re-establishment of local administration in partisan-held areas. It is unlikely that a clear-cut division between civilian and military authority existed in the partisan-controlled areas, for the simultaneous control of the partisan brigades by both political and military authorities would have made a complete separation of their political and military functions impossible.

C. PARTY AND KOMSOMOL

The role of the Party in actual administration remains obscure. On the one hand, German reports as well as Soviet postwar accounts often tended to exaggerate the part played by Communist organizations; on the other hand, a network of Party cells was supposed to exist in the underground, often in close conjunction with the partisan movement. Frequently the Party committees existed merely on paper until a partisan unit arose in the area and permitted their activation. In the absence of other evidence, one must conclude that the revival of local government in partisan areas involved the transformation of the phantom network of Party committees into an overt and effective body. The putative prestige of the Party and its local representatives was intended to facilitate the fulfillment of partisan orders; while, in reverse, the physical force of the partisans made it possible to restore Party organs in a political no man's land.

[The territorial Party structure must not be confused with the Party cells functioning within the partisan units themselves. In addition to the Party, the Komsomol was likewise reactivated. It appears that Komsomol members were widely used for political propaganda activities under Party direction.]

Orders to the local population were often issued over the joint signatures of partisan and Party commanders.

In virtually all instances, the re-establishment of Party and State organs resulted in a series of *local* bodies, the highest at the rayon level. In fact, and quite naturally so in view of the limited size of the partisan-controlled areas, no actual administrative bodies on a higher echelon seem to have re-emerged, though in name (and in the underground) oblast committees of Party and Komsomol existed, and occasionally appeals were distributed in the name of a mythical (or evacuated) USSR or BSSR soviet.

[Evidently inter-rayon committees (generally troikas) were instituted in areas where it was physically impossible to organize separate *raikomy* in each of several adjacent rayons.]

D. SOVIETS

Though the phantom Party bodies were restored in fact, the local soviets remained largely fictitious even in partisan-held areas. Mention of them—sometimes merely of Executive Committees of rayon soviets— in partisan leaflets, newspapers, and orders must be considered an attempt to provide a cloak of legitimacy for the new State (as distinguished from Party) organs and to "demonstrate" the presence of these bodies, which in Soviet mythology had become an inalienable part of the Communist order.

In many cases, a "chairman of the village soviet" was reappointed, in addition to the kolkhoz chairman. Both carried out partisan orders on the delivery of grain and other goods and services. In another case, an order on local curfew and guard regulations was issued jointly by the commander and commissar of a partisan unit in Kalinin Oblast and the "chairman of the Executive Committee" of the rayon soviet.

[The confusion is heightened by the fact that their order, evidently in an attempt at "legitimacy," was based on a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and was addressed to the "Rayon Soviet of Workers' and Red Army Deputies of Nevel"—an institution of Civil War days that had long been defunct. This was either a characteristic improvisation of a local partisan and Party official, or else simply an error in terminology. See Appendix, Document 40.]

References to rayon soviets appear most frequently on the masthead of partisan newspapers, always following the reference to the Party *raikom*. Likewise, an order of 8 April 1942, providing for the establishment of home guard units in Klichev Rayon, one of the more thoroughly partisan-controlled districts in Mogilev Oblast, was signed by the Party *raikom* and the "Rayon Soviet of Toilers' Deputies."

[Tsanava, I, 163. In the comment, the author speaks merely of the *raikom* and "rayon executive committee," rather than a full soviet. The appeal itself, curiously enough, in speaking of "Soviet organs," asks the population to help "military [i.e., partisan] and local organs" alike, listing the two as separate categories. On the home guard, see Sect. VI, H.]

E. JUDICIARY AND EXECUTIVE

There is no evidence of a systematic restoration of judicial organs. Considering the nature of partisan activity and the conditions under which areas were seized and held, it is scarcely surprising that no "civil courts" were established. The only pertinent data reveal the creation of a "Revolutionary-Military Tribunal" (once more the revival of a Civil War term) in the Dedushka

Partisan Regiment. According to a newspaper account, this was established in October 1941 as a three-man board.

[*Fokinskii Rabochii* (organ of Dyatkovo Rayon Party Committee and Rayon Soviet), no. 55 (25 April 1942). According to this account, the board was "elected" and evidently tried collaborators apprehended by the partisans.]

A German report stated that, in the spring of 1942, partisans "officially restoring Soviet authority" in a group of villages in Baranoviche Oblast, in addition to hoisting a red flag, began by proclaiming their assumption of judicial authority, probably for the conviction of collaborators and perhaps marauders. Other partisan units established various revolutionary tribunals, special three-man boards reminiscent of NKVD troikas, and courts-martial, to deal with discipline and treason cases within the unit and to "handle" collaborators.

The report of the Dedovichi troika discusses at some length the liquidation of collaborators in the partisan-held area; this more orderly extermination must be distinguished from individual attacks and assassinations of collaborators in German-held territory. As the report states, "The special task of the troika was the struggle against traitors and other counterrevolutionaries ... to destroy these elements and to establish, in the enemy rear area, a basis of unhindered work in the spirit of the Soviet regime." During its first nine months, the troika and sixty "traitors" shot, including twenty-two alleged kulaks.

F. ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEES

A peculiar form of organization that arose during the war was the Anti-Fascist Committee, which was intended largely as a political and propaganda organ, not as a unit of administration. In essence, these committees paralleled the network of Communist Party rayon and oblast committees in the areas annexed to the USSR in 1939-40: Western Belorussia, the Western Ukraine, and the Baltic States.

[In addition, one reference has been found to "anti-Fascist cells" which were to be established in the Bryansk area in conjunction with the formation of local indigenous assistance groups. It is likely that this refers to the groups described below as home guards. See Sect. VI, H.]

In some respects they resembled the anti-Fascist Jewish and Women's committees established in the USSR and abroad during the war, as well as the "Fatherland Fronts" and "United Fronts" created in some of the subsequent satellite states. Their basic purpose was to enlist personnel *outside* the ranks of the Communist Party in areas where the Party, in numbers and popularity, was assumed to be too weak to provide sufficient cadres and pulling power for political and propaganda work.

The plan to establish such bodies appears to have originated early in the war. If Soviet accounts are to be believed, the Belorussian Party sent organizers into Brest Oblast in August 1941. By early 1942 they had succeeded in establishing an indigenous organization and in April formed the "Oblast Anti-Fascist Committee for Struggle Against the German Occupiers," whose central office consisted of a Secretariat, a Special Section, an Agitation and Propaganda Section, and a Training Section; a typical counterpart to an underground Party or Komsomol *obkom.* It had assembled several typewriters, a ramshackle printing press and supplies, and began publishing daily news bulletins as well as leaflets. Its range of activity is suggested by the fact that it published leaflets in German and in Polish as well as in Russian.

[Tsanava, I, 197, 226.]

Likewise, in Vileika, Baranoviche, and Bialystok Oblasts, Anti-Fascist committees arose in 1942-44.

[There are suggestions that they also existed in Lithuania and Volhynia. No evidence has been found to show their existence in Galicia.]

In the latter two and in Brest, the oblast Anti-Fascist Committees published their own newspapers in addition to those issued by the Party. They also issued their own leaflets and helped with the distribution of others. In Vileika, a Soviet account states, their organization was speeded up by order of the Party *obkom* from August 1942 on; by November 1943, 100 such cells, including youth groups, are alleged to have existed there, some probably being temporary units.

[Tsanava, II, 954]

In all instances, the sponsorship and direction of the Anti-Fascist Committees were in Party and regular partisan hands. In Brest, Party organizers established them; in Vileika they were created "from the *aktiv* connected with the partisan movement." Unmistakably "front" organizations, the committees also carried out specific operations in conjunction with the underground and the partisans. An Anti-Fascist Committee is alleged to have seized and delivered alive to the partisans the first deputy mayor of Baranoviche, a certain Ruzak; others carried out demolition tasks. By April 1944, when the partisans were ready to strike all-out blows in cooperation with the advancing Red Army, at least some of the Anti-Fascist Committees were transformed into regular partisan detachments.

Whether the special device of establishing Anti-Fascist Committees on a broader basis than Party cells was successful cannot be judged from the available material.

[No effort has been made to investigate their activity in the Baltic States.]

Their very creation, however, is indicative of the flexibility of the Soviet authorities in recognizing that the "new" areas called for a more subtle approach than was required in the "sovietized" regions, and that popular support had to be sought by means that constituted a typical, though by no means unique, concession and temporary deviation from standard procedures.

G. ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

Standard measures of the partisan administration included the establishment of law and order, albeit of a peculiar sort. The removal of local officials appointed by the Germans was one of the first steps; at times, the "disposal" of irregular bands, marauders, and criminals was undertaken. Posting guards, proclaiming police regulations, registering residents and livestock, and establishing a pass system for entering or leaving the locality usually followed. In addition, the return of state and communal property distributed by the Germans, or of private property "reassigned" or plundered under the occupation, frequently took place. The general pattern, though fluid and often informal, aimed at the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* in fact as well as in form, with such alterations as the military situation demanded.

In parts of the Northern Ukraine, Belorussia, and Leningrad Oblast where, during the last months of the occupation, the Germans made attempts to evacuate the entire population westward—either as a punitive measure occasioned by partisan activity, or in an attempt to rescue manpower—the partisan administration sought to establish special "forest camps" to which the

population could flee from the villages and escape German seizure. Conditions in such camps, especially during the severe winter of 1943-44, appear to have been horrifying.

[The earliest such camps were reported in January 1943 in Belorussia. See also Sect. V, D, 2.]

German records are virtually devoid of information on them, but even accounts in partisan newspapers and leaflets suggest that there was considerable dissatisfaction among the civilians. The administrative side of the camp organization is best revealed by a report on a conference of local soviet, Party, kolkhoz chairmen, and police representatives held near Plyussa (southwest of Luga) on 30 December 1943. The partisan administrative functions discussed covered:

Organization of material aid to the partisans;
Defense of the Revolutionary Order;
Saving the peaceful inhabitants and their property from the German robbers;
Public works [i.e., mud-huts] in the evacuee forest camps;
Preparations for spring sowing.

[*Partizanskaya Mest* (organ of the Fifth Leningrad Brigade), no. 36 (3 January 1944). One of the speakers discussed the construction of a public bath, a bakery, and an enclosure for the cattle driven from the German-held villages. "We have already figured out," he added, "that when the Red Army returns we must sow no less than eighty hectares."]

Here as elsewhere, the formula for partisan administration was: "The people's power in the German rear rests on the armed force of the partisans, who in turn lean on the constant help of the popular masses."

H. HOME GUARD

A standard function of local organization in partisan-held areas was the establishment of an auxiliary force composed of indigenous personnel. This force—variously referred to in both German and Soviet sources, probably in accordance with actual variations on the spot—amounted to a combination of militia and service agencies. There is no indication that such home guards existed before the spring of 1942, but between March and May 1942 they were organized in a number of partisan-held areas. It is possible that their creation followed a special order from Moscow.

[According to the record of the Morogov Detachment, operating in Smolensk Oblast in May 1942, meetings were held in four villages at which the commander and commissar of the unit staged a "comprehensive discussion of Order No. 130/ 1942 of the People's Commissariat for Defense [concerning] the tasks of the kolkhoz peasants in the rear of the enemy. . . . According to the resolution of the kolkhoz peasants, self-protection groups will be organized from among the local inhabitants in the villages." [See Appendix, Document 19.] The Stalin Order No. 130/1942 is his First-of-May appeal and contains merely a brief general exhortation to the partisans.]

In Kalinin Oblast, a partisan unit and the rayon soviet revived by it ordered such a "guard unit" to be organized from among the residents. By early April 1942 the Klichev partisans, in the name of the rayon soviet and Party *raikom,* ordered: "For the purpose of guarding inhabited localities from Fascist occupiers, Red partisan otryads of self-defense are to be organized in each locality.

[Tsanava, I, 163.]

Soviet memoirs likewise indicate the formation of such units in the first half of 1942. In the Bryansk forest, they were established nominally by the underground Party *raikom* and had a squad of partisans attached to them. They acted as a police force to keep local law and order, distributed leaflets, and later engaged in regular military operations with the partisans. There are also indications that some disagreement arose within the partisan command on the question of forming such "assistance groups." As was explained in one of the Soviet memoirs, some partisans, even before the official organization, had used local personnel to help guard villages and gather uniforms and food. "What remained was to organize these groups properly, to direct them, and to protect them from surprise attacks." But opposition arose from two sides: security-conscious partisan leaders who feared that mixing "old women and invalids" with the partisan movement (something of an exaggeration) would increase the chances of infiltration by German agents; and the most stalwart Communists who insisted that the partisan movement and Communist Party had to remain a small "vanguard" and should not be "diluted" among the non-Party mass. With Stalin's order supporting their stand, those arguing for the extension of the home guard system prevailed.

[Andreyev, pp. 193-97, 206-7.]

By August 1942 home guards existed in Kalinin and Smolensk Oblasts, near Bobruisk, Bryansk, and Navlya. In some instances, women and boys fourteen years or over were drawn into the units. In all verifiable cases, they were either under the command of a partisan attached to the home guard or were headed by "experienced Comrades" (as one Soviet writer puts it).

It appears that home guard units were established only in areas where the partisans were comparatively strong and expected to maintain their control. Civil administrators, such as mayors, could be put in office even if their control were to be transitory, but the establishment of the home guard presupposed continued contact. Its main tasks, as they evolved from 1942 on, included the prevention of local unrest and marauding; the maintenance of some defense in case of raids by German and collaborator forces; the alerting of regular partisan units in emergencies; limited assistance to the indigenous population in agriculture, construction, and other tasks desired by the partisans; and, especially in 1944, outright participation in partisan operations, in some instances as regular partisan units.

There is evidence that at least in one instance, in April 1943, a "Red Home Guard," headed by the old militia chief, took control of an area in Kharkov Oblast when the Germans abandoned it and before the Red Army could take over in strength. The home guard was organized ostensibly by local partisans largely for police purposes.

[GFP Gr. 647, Aussendienststelle IV, "Schlussbericht," 27 April 1943 (GMDS, XXXXVIII AK 40773/22, Anlage 177). There had been virtually no partisan activity here before the German retreat.]

In substance, the home guards were a partisan counterpart to the German-sponsored *Ordnungsdienst* and *Wehrdoerfer,* "armed villages," established for self-defense against partisan raids. On the German as on the partisan side, one major reason for such organizations was the shortage of trained military personnel. In each instance, some disagreement arose over the usefulness of drawing the more indifferent mass of rank-and-file inhabitants into the movement; in each instance the process was found to be necessary. In the general polarization of attitudes in the occupied territory the local police, both under partisans and Germans, was gradually transformed into a fighting force. At the same time, the partisan home guard does not appear to have played a leading part in paramilitary operations; it remained in large measure a defensive organization.

I. RECRUITMENT

An important part of the reimposition of Soviet controls was the recruitment of personnel from the occupied territories for the partisan movement and the Red Army. This process marked the transition between direct partisan action, often involving threats or compulsion, and the re-imposition of regular mobilization procedures. It is only the latter that falls within the purview of this section. [For discussions of recruitment, see also Chap. Ill, Sect. II, B.]

Once the somewhat haphazard seizure of men was superseded by a more orderly draft, the partisans and the partisan-imposed local government proceeded to decree mobilization on the basis of Soviet laws. Usually draft notices were posted publicly in partisan-controlled villages; in some instances such notices were even sent to individuals residing in German-held towns (for instance, in Bobruisk and Latvia). The peak of formal recruitment activities apparently was reached during the second half of 1942, i.e., the period when partisan strength was sufficient to command obedience, but when there were still available stragglers and local inhabitants of draft age. Thus, a poster in a partisan-occupied village in the summer of 1942 ordered:

All members of the [Soviet] Armed Forces who escaped from encirclement and are at home, also all men born in 1925, report to your regular units or join the partisan units! Those who remain in hiding and continue to sit home in order to save their skins and those . . . who do not help destroy the German robbers . . . are traitors to the fatherland and will be liquidated by us sooner or later.

[XXIII AK Ic "Übersetzung, Tagebuch der Kampfhandlungen der Partisanenabteilung des Oblt. Morogoff," September 1942 (GMDS, 339 ID 29087/4).]

In other instances, the call to arms was far more specific, stipulating date and place to which prospective recruits were to report. In the more highly organized partisan brigades, a regular examination procedure was established, in which the secret police organs (i.e., normally the "OO") assumed responsibility for screening. [See Chap. V, Sect. I.] Ordinarily, the partisans themselves would carry out the mobilization; at times, local mayors and village chairmen were employed to help induct draftees; and occasionally the partisans revived a sort of draft board resembling normal Soviet procedure *(voyenkomat),* i.e., a special agency (on a territorial basis) which selected recruits according to rosters of the indigenous population and mobilization classifications previously assigned.

A special situation obtained in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area, where the role of the Soviet Army, along with that of the partisans, was greater than elsewhere. [For a detailed analysis, see Chap. VII, Sect. II, B.] Here Army officers were brought in from the outside to muster recruits; regular medical examinations were conducted by Army officers; a substantial number of men were exempted from military service, and those accepted were sent either to the Red Army or to the partisan units operating in the area. Elsewhere, the procedures seem to have been less formal. However, in almost all partisan-held areas, the mobilization of men, gradually extended in age groups, remained a key activity, carried out by resorting both to Soviet "legality" and physical force.

J. REQUISITIONS

To an even greater extent than recruitment, partisan requisition activities fall into the border zone between haphazard seizure and organized collection of compulsory deliveries. Only the latter type, amounting to institutionalized taxation in kind, can be considered a governmental activity by the partisans; the rest was a form of looting, primarily for purposes of immediate use.

Formal requisition notices, demanding the surrender of specified quantities of grain or other products, were posted by partisans even in localities where they had established no indigenous administrative apparatus. Frequently the orders contained specific quotas; in other cases, the partisans announced the quantities to be surrendered at public meetings held in the village to celebrate the "liberation." Generally receipts were given for foodstuffs procured in this fashion. Later on, some of the partisan units adopted special forms and seals for their receipts, in part to give the transactions a stamp of legality.

[Generally receipts were given in lieu of payment. In at least one instance, however, the partisans paid in German-issued currency at higher rates than the Germans paid—largely for psychological reasons, one may assume. In another case, a band offered premiums for superior deliveries, in the form of increased land assignments]

Moreover, such orderly procedures were aimed at reducing looting by undisciplined partisans. [See Chap. Ill, Sect. III, D.]

Where the partisans had established a modicum of local government, usually requisition requests were transmitted through the mayors, kolkhoz chairmen, or other newly appointed officials; at times the local "auxiliary committees" (forerunners of the home guard) did the collecting. There are numerous partisan directives addressed to rayon soviet chairmen, mayors, or managers of individual farms.

The intensity of the requisitioning, and the extent to which compulsion was used in extracting food and other products from the population, varied from area to area. While some regions were stripped of virtually all produce and sometimes were constrained by considerable intimidation and summary punishment, in other areas the peasantry was left decidedly better off than it had been under German rule. Though details are lacking on organizational changes reflecting varying local conditions, it is clear that the partisans were content wherever possible to restrict themselves to stating quotas and quantities they wished to obtain and to leave the implementation of their orders to their indigenous appointees.

On some occasions the partisans issued, rather than collected, food among the local population; in particular, scarce commodities such as salt, tobacco, and textiles were at times distributed either free or at low prices. Such efforts cannot properly be considered as administrative tasks; usually they were psychological warfare measures carried out shortly after the partisans' arrival, aimed at impressing the inhabitants; or they were emergency steps to satisfy the local population or enable it to work for them; or they were rewards for "good behavior" after a successful operation in which such supplies were procured.

[There are some indications that, everything else being equal, the partisans preferred to be more severe toward people in marginal areas (who were also more exposed to heavy German levies) than toward the residents of the partisan-held areas, from whom further quotas could be exacted at future times.]

K. CASH AND STATE LOAN COLLECTIONS

In well-controlled partisan areas, a special effort was made to collect funds for Soviet armament and to underwrite Soviet state loans. Such efforts, it is true, were a far more customary means of milking the inhabitants in the USSR than might appear at first. Nevertheless, their relative success (if one may believe Soviet sources) does indeed testify to the considerable measure of control and compulsion exercised by the partisans. At all times an effort was made to depict the contributions as spontaneous, voluntary moves by the population. They were widely acclaimed

at partisan rallies as an achievement to be emulated elsewhere; the Soviet press on both sides of the front made considerable use of them, and, at times, direct messages of gratitude were transmitted in token demonstrations of the solidarity of Soviet and partisan-held territories. In substance, the political and propaganda purposes of the operation clearly outweighed the financial and monetary benefits derived from it. Not the least of the former was the closer bond of identification that the operation established between the civilians (and partisans) and the Soviet regime.

As early as the spring of 1942 some villages in Leningrad Oblast were reported to have sent 3,000 poods (108,300 pounds) of food to the starving population of Leningrad—a widely hailed move that was acclaimed in a *Pravda* editorial in March. A few weeks later, both in this area and in the Bryansk forest, a collection of money for the "State Defense Fund" was begun. According to V. Andreyev, the author of a volume of memoirs on the Bryansk partisans, a sum of 2,500,000 rubles was collected by Party, Komsomol, and partisan units for the "purchase" of an armored column, which was then ordered and delivered to the Red Army on behalf of the partisan area. During the same period, a group of village soviets in the area in which the Morogov detachment conducted systematic and intensive propaganda also "received the assistance of ten men to explain the announced state loan." As a result, contributions were made to purchase state bonds.

L. AGRICULTURE

By far the most crucial and controversial problem was the fate of the collective farms.

[Scattered efforts were made in partisan-held areas to stimulate the activity of artisans and small-scale industries. Given the areas and conditions involved, such endeavors were bound to be meagre and sporadic. They amounted to the reopening of a carpenter shop, a leather factory producing shoes, and a workshop building barrels. Most frequently such "production" was geared to partisan needs, especially in wearing apparel or equipment. No complex or rigid organization was needed to control it. In addition, instances are reported in which partisans drafted the population (and occasionally prisoners captured by them) as compulsory labor.]

Given the close identification of the kolkhoz system with the very essence of the Soviet regime—a link carefully nurtured by official propaganda over a number of years—and the evidence of widespread popular hostility to the maintenance of collective farms, the Soviet policy-makers faced a difficult dilemma. Theoretically, the reimposition of Soviet institutions and controls in partisan-held areas called for the re-establishment of collective farming as one of the first measures. On the other hand, the process of wartime accommodation to popular sentiments in a variety of fields, ranging from Russian patriotism to religious sentiments, involved a temporary retreat from prewar Soviet practices and slogans in an effort to rally popular support for the regime. On the Soviet side of the front, the collective farms were maintained; their abolition in wartime was both impossible politically and impracticable economically. Though in practice Soviet controls loosened to such an extent that a stringent tautening was required after the war, officially Moscow could not and presumably did not seriously envision a genuine change in agrarian relations.

At the same time the potency of the antikolkhoz theme was not lost on Soviet propaganda. The few German propaganda efforts made in this direction, feeble and halfhearted though they were, appear to have had a considerable measure of success during the first months of the war; reports on spontaneous action by kolkhoz farmers immediately following the withdrawal of the Red Army speak of a general effort to abolish the collective farms and reintroduce private ownership of garden plots, cattle, equipment and inventory, and in some instances, land holdings. Soviet psychological warfare exploited the antikolkhoz sentiment in the Red Army by systematically

spreading rumors about the prospect of an alleged dissolution of collective farms by the Soviet government after the war. Such rumors were too ubiquitous to be considered either spontaneous or accidental.

The partisans faced substantially the same dilemma. During the first months after the German invasion no particular changes in partisan attitudes toward collective farms were apparent: the partisans were too weak to control kolkhoz areas and were usually cut off from Soviet commands; apparently it also took a certain time for Soviet directives to be readjusted. Again, during the latter part of the war, from about the fall of 1943 to the end, there is no evidence of deviation among the partisans from orthodox Soviet attitudes toward collective farms; at that time, the partisans were strong enough to control the areas and to make headway without resorting to exceptional and, in the minds of the Soviet leaders, highly dangerous tactics. Thus the crucial period was from October 1941 to the spring or summer of 1943.

In Chernigov Oblast, the Party *obkom* which organized the partisan movement sanctioned a transfer of garden plots and peasants huts to the private ownership of their users. The memoirs of the oblast partisan leader, Fyodorov, confirm the fact that the rayon soviet (directed by the *obkom)* "instructed] the kolkhozes to divide the property among the peasants without delay," though the instructions referred, apparently, only to movable property.

[Chef Sipo u. SD, "Ereignismeldung UdSSR, Nr. 107," 8 October 1941, p. 4 (GMDS, SD-29); Fyodorov, p. 104.]

In this instance, one purpose may have been to prevent the farm implements from falling into German hands. That such a decision could not be taken without at least tacit assent from higher Soviet organs is suggested by Fyodorov's reference to the *obkom* decision, his discussion of it after the war, and the fact that another German report from an adjacent area likewise asserted that, by December 1941, partisans acting on orders from higher Soviet authorities divided farm tools and cattle among the peasantry.

[Befh.d.rueckw.H.Geb.Mitte, Prop.-Abt.W, "Stimmungsbericht zum Propagandalage- und Taetigkeitsbericht vom 1.-15.12.1941," n.d. (GMDS, OKW/479).]

The tactical element was no longer in evidence at the end of 1941. In December of that year Army Group Center reported that the partisans "by instructions from Moscow had distributed kolkhoz land to the peasants." There is virtually no documentary proof that a full-fledged dissolution of collective farms was undertaken by the partisans; most German reports discussing it were based on hearsay or interrogation. Yet the frequency and geographic distribution of German statements suggest that the reports were not fabricated by individual officers or indigenous informants. In March 1942 the Second Panzer Army reported that north of Bryansk peasants in partisan areas "received land and a share of the harvest as their property." Farther west, in Glusk Rayon, the Germans claimed that "the partisans had divided the agricultural enterprises fully among the rural population." Other reports for July and November 1942 likewise spoke of the partition of kolkhoz land in partisan-held areas, as well as the institution of premiums in the form of enlarged land grants to those who exceeded grain delivery quotas.

Only one official Soviet publication, as far as can be determined, admits that collectives were not re-established in all areas captured by the partisans. Viktor Liventsev, in an account of the Bobruisk area partisan movement, describes the election of a new *raikom* in Klichev Rayon in April 1942, following the disintegration of the original underground Party organization left behind in 1941. This new *raikom* settled the question of spring sowing in 1942 by a decree that

stated: "Spring sowing and use of the land in 1942 is to be carried out either collectively or individually, according to the wishes of the kolkhoz members."

[Viktor Liventsev, *Partisanskii krai* (Leningrad: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1951), p. 173. The decree also authorized the peasants to use draft animals "jointly or individually" subject to the approval of either the village soviet or the kolkhoz chairman (where there were collectives).

A former partisan states that the Voroshilov Brigade, operating in Belyi Rayon, was popular with the inhabitants because it "permitted the peasants who had dissolved their kolkhozes to continue in the same manner." (Russian Research Center, B 7, #140, pp. 47-48.]

Whether the technical-economic or the political considerations weighed heavier in permitting the peasants to choose between collective and individual farm work in this instance, of course, cannot be established.

Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that the myth of the kolkhoz system was fully maintained in official Soviet and partisan (printed) propaganda; the names of partisan newspapers continued to include the word "kolkhoz" in their titles (though in fewer instances than in 1941 and 1943-44); and while Soviet psychological warfare in general addressed its target more frequently as "peasants" than as "kolkhozniks," there was not the least suggestion of disparaging the concept of the kolkhoz. Quite the contrary; propaganda, whenever it belabored the agrarian theme, displayed pride and insistence on the maintenance of collective farming. Thus the prevalent phenomenon in 1942 appears to have been the re-establishment of the institution and form of the kolkhoz in most partisan-held areas, while introducing substantial changes in actual practice. This device permitted the partisans loyally to maintain Soviet slogans and façades while capitalizing on popular satisfaction with changes in practice.

The major changes, within the looser frame of kolkhoz organization, concerned private ownership of livestock, agricultural implements, dwellings, and in some instances land. Their extent varied from area to area. In September 1942 the partisans northeast of Minsk were reported to have "in some instances introduced a new agrarian order on the basis of collectives, which, while maintaining the old delivery quotas, grants the peasantry greater land plots." The authors of Chapter IX of this book conclude that, in the Polotsk area, the partisans, in order to assure the cooperation of the peasants, went "so far as to institute an agrarian reform which, as a German observer points out, was superior to a similar German reform." This, "carried out on orders from Moscow," provided for an increase in individual peasant garden plots, while retaining the kolkhoz system. One German summary report even claimed to know that the new agrarian order on the distribution of land and the revision of delivery quotas in partisan areas was based on a Stalin order. "In some of the thoroughly partisan-held areas an entirely new delivery system is being introduced by order of Stalin. The peasants in these areas must turn in only half the amounts demanded in the areas controlled by us [i.e., the Germans]. In addition, there are cases in which peasants have been given their own land, and usually in larger allotments than by us."

[PzAOK 2, "Anlage zu Pz. AOK 2, Ic/AO Nr. 960/42 geh. vom 3.12.42" (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 37075/159). See also *Nachrichten,* Nr. 3, p. 8.]

An order of the Klichev Rayon partisans and Party committee on the distribution of the 1942 harvest points in the same direction, without making explicit the extent to which the directives deviated from Soviet peacetime standards. In this instance, there is no evidence that land or cattle were made private property, but the harvest distribution went further than had been previously

allowed; special privileges were accorded to wives and widows of partisans and Red Army soldiers.

[Tsanava, II, 87-88. It is interesting that Tsanava, in discussing the Klichev Rayon in 1942, does not cite the Liventsev order quoted above.]

In some areas, however, there is no indication that partisans permitted a relaxation of the kolkhoz system. This was particularly true in Smolensk and Leningrad Oblasts. In the Smolensk area, collective farms were promptly restored in the territory seized by the partisans who operated under the over-all direction of General Belov. A letter, ostensibly signed by 15,000 partisans and civilians and sent to Stalin, stated: "In the villages and towns liberated from the German occupiers we have re-established the organs of Soviet administration. On the collective farms we have begun the spring sowing." [See Chap. VII, Sect. IV, A; Appendix, Document 19.]

Likewise, southwest of Leningrad the administrative troikas were charged with re-establishing the kolkhozes. Slogans and titles in partisan printed propaganda in this region abounded with references to collective farms. A letter sent by partisans and civilians from the territory held by the 2d Brigade to Andrei Zhdanov, secretary of the Leningrad Party *obkom,* declared that "in our area we live in Soviet fashion. ... In the collective farms, general meetings are taking place, agitators are at work, the harvest is being gathered."

[*Narodnyi Mstitel,* no. 11 (31 August 1942)]

The report of the Dedovichi troika, quoted earlier in this section, specifically describes how: "Since the kolkhozes had been dissolved in most of the selsoviets and the harvest had already been divided equally among the peasants according to the [total] number of persons, a very difficult situation presented itself to the troika. The kolkhoz cattle had been distributed among a few kolkhozniks and often the edinolichniks [those who had not belonged to the kolkhoz] too had received cattle." To implement the reinstitution of the kolkhoz, "All German-appointed starostas were fired and the former kolkhoz officials were called back again. The whole inventory of the kolkhoz and the herds of cattle were collected together again. The harvest was redivided, not according to the number of persons but according to working days performed. The elements hostile in attitude to the kolkhoz were liquidated."

By the spring of 1942, the Dedovichi troika averred, all sixty collectives in its area (along with eight sovkhozes) were well prepared to proceed with the spring sowing. Nowhere in Leningrad Oblast does a division of kolkhoz property seem to have occurred with the sanction of partisans or underground Party.

The above examples suffice to illustrate five possible hypotheses about the agrarian policy pursued by the partisans.

(1) Did the Germans attribute a reformist policy to the partisans when in reality spontaneous acts by the peasantry itself were all that had happened? Though this may have occurred, the consistent references to Party and Soviet directives, as well as implicit statements in Soviet sources, permit the rejection of the hypothesis. Likewise, some German descriptions of partisan land reforms may be ascribed to efforts of German advocates of agrarian reform to impress their own superiors; however, this does not adequately explain all the evidence on partisan-conducted reforms.

(2) Did the partisans spontaneously institute the partition of property and land without sanction from Moscow? Though such action may indeed have taken place, especially during the winter of

1941-42, many of the examples cited above refer to units and time periods when the partisans were under fairly rigid control from the Soviet side. This hypothesis must likewise be rejected as, at best, only a partial explanation.

(3) Did the partisans promote agrarian reforms in areas on the fringes of their territory and beyond, but seek to maintain the collective farms in areas they held firmly? The evidence does not suffice to form a positive answer. There are some hints that the partisans encouraged outright abolition of collective farms in German-held areas, in an obvious attempt to undermine German efforts and, after the limited German reform of February 1942, to outbid the Germans in catering to peasant demands. It is also clear that in centers of strength, especially in 1943-44, the partisans nowhere considered, let alone implemented, a breakdown of such Soviet institutions as the collective farm. Nevertheless, some of the material adduced above pertains to areas firmly and rather permanently held by the partisans, and these still witnessed a substantial agrarian reform.

(4) Thus one is tempted to conclude that the *de facto* loosening of the kolkhoz structure, while maintaining its *de jure* status, was a widely applied partisan policy, which had official Soviet sanction as an important stage in wartime "concession" tactics, designed to win the fuller support of the population. The policy was not introduced until after the relatively widespread defection of the peasantry had become apparent; it stemmed from weakness, not strength; and it was revoked as soon as Soviet and partisan power had become sufficient to permit once again a greater disregard for popular aspirations.

One can' only speculate about the reasons for the geographic variations in agrarian policy, which appear to have been more than random. The scant available information suggests that the Soviet government consciously reserved the "final" reimposition of Soviet controls and institutions, as well as the conduct of purges, for the Red Army (and the NKVD operating in conjunction with it), even in areas where partisans had ruled previously. This would explain the kolkhoz policy adopted in Smolensk Oblast in 1942, where the partisans were under more thorough Army control than elsewhere.

[The skepticism exhibited by the Red Army toward the partisans in 1943-45 is reported by several former partisans and soldiers. See also V. Gromov, "Stalinskaya nagrada partizanam," *Na rubezhe* (Paris), no. 3-4 (July-August 1952), pp. 43-44. The substitution of Army for partisan controls is well illustrated in the following German report:

In Khomutovka Rayon the partisans had ruled by themselves for several weeks. . . . They had not established a regular administration. . . . The regular Soviet troops who succeeded them promptly established a complete administrative apparatus with NKVD, Party organs, etc. It included the former institutions, i.e., also rayon and village soviets. At the same time, a court was installed which thoroughly screened all former employees and workers of the German agencies. . . . Initially there were partisans among the judges; however, since they were not without prejudice, persons from among the civilian population were co-opted [in their place]. (Wi Kdo Kursk, "Lagebericht fuer die Zeit vom 16.5.—15.6.1943," 17 June 1943, GMDS, Wi/ID 2.773, Anlage 35.)]

It would seem that the exception found in Leningrad Oblast reflected a policy disagreement at a higher Soviet level. The Leningrad partisans, whose organization was marked by a variety of divergences from other patterns, were under the general direction of Andrei Zhdanov and his staff, which was filled with what may be considered the left wing of the Bolshevik Party—a trend that is assumed to have contributed substantially to the Zhdanov-Malenkov feud in the postwar years. It thus appears likely that the Leningrad *obkom* stood pat on the maintenance of the collective farms, while other Soviet leaders advocated a "temporary retreat."

[Some support for this thesis can be derived from a reference to the re-establishment of collective farm regulations in partisan-held areas "on orders from Comrade Zhdanov," in the troika report already cited. See Appendix, Document 16.]

Andrei Andreyev, another member of the Politburo, seems to have represented the opposite extreme. Andreyev, who after the war was dropped from the Soviet hierarchy primarily because of agrarian policy differences, was at times depicted, even by Soviet wartime agents, as a "moderate." In the summer of 1942, during the conferences of top partisans in the Kremlin, he reportedly discussed the problem with Bondarenko, commissar of the Southern Bryansk Operative Group. According to a German interrogation, "The partisan leaders reported [in Moscow] that they had reintroduced the Soviet system in 170 populated points. Andreyev countered that the partisans must change their tactics. It was not their task to re-establish the Soviet system; this was the task of the Red Army.. . . Andreyev advised against reintroducing the kolkhoz system."

[PzAOK 2, Ic/AO, "Meldung," 6 December 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 30233/ 64). On the Moscow conference of the partisan leaders, see also this book, Chap. II, Sect. III, H, 2.

Andreyev's role in Soviet agriculture bears special investigation. He was the only member of the Politburo tainted by past association with Bukharin, though he quickly managed to get on the "Stalin bandwagon" in the twenties. By 1939 he favored an extension of the *zveno* system (small groups of about a dozen men working the land, in contrast with the larger brigades), since "the more work on the collective farm is individualized . . . the more efficient it will be." After the war, Andreyev headed a special Council on Kolkhoz Affairs and in this capacity extended the use of the *zveno.* After 1947 his position became progressively weaker; in 1950 he was attacked in *Pravda* for his agricultural policies and was replaced by Khrushchev as chief of agrarian problems in the Soviet hierarchy. A qualified analyst suggests that the Soviet leadership was apprehensive lest "the small *zveno* unit eventually supplant not only the brigade but also the kolkhoz itself." [Lazar Volin, *A Survey of Soviet Russian Agriculture,* U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agriculture Monograph 5, p. 30; Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (rev. ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 538.] It is possible that Khrushchev, in charge of the partisan movement in the Ukraine, tried to follow there a policy similar to Zhdanov's in Leningrad, aiming at a prompt revival of strict kolkhoz orthodoxy. However, the evidence does not suffice to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

Andreyev's attitude toward the collectives in partisan-held territory during the war assumes special importance in this context. It is also curious that the mission entrusted to a Soviet agent to subvert the Vlasov movement included the theme that the kolkhoz would be abolished after the war and that Andreyev, of all people, would then become head of state. See Sect. IV, C, 2.]

M. SUMMARY

Almost everywhere in their areas, the partisans attempted to establish a form of administration responsive to their demands. Some of their moves were aimed primarily at satisfying their own needs; requisitions, to some extent recruitment, the security functions of military commandants, and the home guard fell into this category. Other tasks, such as the liquidation or arrest of collaborators and some military functions were conditioned by the specific environment in which the partisans operated. And yet in some significant respects the essence of partisan administrative policy was the reinstitution of the Soviet system, with all its associations of fear and authority, power and prestige.

[In this connection, the sporadic psychological warfare efforts of the partisans are of interest in so far as they sought to impress the population that they were still *bona fide* Soviet citizens, and that they were vicariously "participating" in Soviet political life. This even reached the point where a Soviet leaflet, distributed in the occupied areas, over the signature of Mikhail Kalinin, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, informed the people on 9 December 1942 that elections to the Supreme Soviet had been postponed for one year. (FK 550, "Lage- und Taetigkeitsbericht fuer die Zeit vom 24.11. bis 22.12.42," 23 December 1942, GMDS, 203 ID 32104.)]

The very terminology current among the partisans—references to the Soviet side as the "Great Land" and to their own areas as the "Little Land" *(Malaya Zemlya)*—indicates the psychological warfare effort implicit in this attempt. The actual administrative work carried out was of little significance beyond immediate partisan demands. On the other hand, the symbolic nature of the partisan areas, the much heralded "re-establishment of Soviet power" in widely scattered areas behind the German lines, and the references to the partisans as a "second front" clearly had n impact on the morale of partisans and Germans alike, and on the attitudes of civilians on both sides of the front.

Many facets of partisan administration remain little known; NKVD activities and the "purges" conducted in areas seized by them need further examination. Yet such moves as the creation of phantom soviets, rayon committees, and other typically Soviet institutions indicate the long-range goals of partisan policy. Inevitably, perhaps, of all branches of the Soviet edifice, State institutions were most tenuous and least "essential" for the reassertion of the regime's authority; military, police, and Party machines proved far more substantial.

At the same time, partisan administration and policy showed considerable awareness of the necessity of "flexibility" and adjustment, albeit momentary, to the particular demands of the population. Distribution of food, variations in agrarian and religious policy, as well as the general manipulation of propaganda themes, all tend to support this conclusion. Thus the Soviet formula, as reflected here, amounted to rigidity in institutions and long-range aspirations but considerable fluidity in short-term tactics.

§VII. The Population Between Germans and Partisans

A. FIRST PHASE OF THE OCCUPATION

As the events of the war revealed, the Soviet population showed both loyalty and disloyalty to the regime. Certain elements of society, particularly those who because of their personal status had a vested interest in the preservation of the regime, were firmly committed on the Soviet side. It seems that among the younger elements and in part among the urban population, especially industrial workers, pro-Soviet sentiments were relatively stronger than among older people and rural elements; among the latter, the kolkhoz farmers constituted a particular source of latent disaffection. At the same time, at least a part of the intelligentsia was not so firmly attached to the Soviet regime that it could be indifferent to disaffection propaganda.

Among the population remaining behind the retreating armies during the early weeks of the 1941 campaign, potential defection from the Soviet cause was heightened by: (1) the evacuation eastward of the most stalwart Communists, including a large part of the bureaucratic and managerial elite; (2) the absence from their places of residence of a sizable number of presumably loyal elements who were serving in the armed forces; (3) the general disruption and disorganization caused by the German onslaught and the Soviet retreat, which tended to weaken the affective and institutional channels of command and loyalty. Thus it may be assumed that a

foreign power gaining control of a large part of the Soviet Union had the opportunity to exploit the grievances of the population against its regime and to seek to win its allegiance. These grievances arose from the frustrations sustained under Soviet rule; varying in intensity and impact, they included the general drive for higher standards of living; friction generated by the kolkhoz system; the manifold ramification and menaces of a police state; forms of compulsion and forced speed-up in production, and labor discipline; and, for some elements, there were also religious and national frustrations.

Initial Soviet wartime measures revealed some awareness of these areas of potential disaffection. On the one hand, harsh forms of reprisal and repression were used against individuals suspected of harboring anti-Soviet designs. On the other hand, an intensive propaganda campaign was begun in two major directions: the "exposing" of German and Fascist aims and practices; and the institution, in word and partly in deed, of tactical concessions to popular aspirations, in an effort to marshal all emotional, physical, and psychic resources of the Soviet people for the war. During the first months of the war, however, much of this Soviet psychological warfare campaign toward its own population was neutralized or canceled by factors partly of its own creation, partly beyond its control. These included the legend of German invincibility, strengthened by initial victories and rapid advances; Soviet scorched-earth measures, which caused resentment among the population; a strong popular quest for tranquillity and "being left alone"; and the impact of war and all its disruptions.

By and large, therefore, the population that found itself under German rule seemed at first prepared to throw in its lot with either side. It was up to the two contending parties to win the allegiance of the rank and file, which was neither sufficiently disaffected to accept any alternative unquestioningly, nor sufficiently attached to the Soviet cause to remain blind to other opportunities.

Germany utterly failed to take advantage of the chance thus offered for winning over the Soviet population. It received, just as the Soviet regime did, overwhelming overt obedience to its rule; but surface adjustment— especially when a generation is inured to mimicry—cannot be taken as a guide to its comparative judgment of the two regimes or to its innermost loyalties. German failure was largely inherent in the very approach of the Nazi leadership to the Soviet problem and the aims which it had set itself in the East. In terms of long-range goals, it utterly disregarded popular aspirations; in terms of immediate demands, it assumed that the war's victorious conclusion within a matter of weeks or months allowed the occupiers to ignore the problem of popular allegiance.

Within a brief span of time, a combination of German moves brought about the first stirrings of disillusionment among those (probably an overwhelming majority) of the population who had adopted a wait-and-see attitude, hopeful but watchful. This early gap between occupier and occupied was to deepen as time proceeded and was never to be closed. Among its early stimuli, the most important was German behavior—the physical and personal experiences of the rank-and-file citizens with the German soldier. The effect was at times positive (because of the evidence of "Western culture," hygienic and cultural standards, and other indications of the "good life" in peacetime Germany) but more often negative (because of German stereotypes about the "Eastern *Untermenschen,"* or the sense of insecurity of the German soldier operating in occupied Russia). Extensive requisitions and increasing physical abuse, at times militarily unnecessary and even senseless, contributed to this negative effect. Moreover, rapidly spreading reports of German maltreatment and neglect of the masses of Soviet prisoners of war in the occupied areas, as well as the activities and atrocities of the SD *Einsatzgruppen,* increased popular dissillusionment with the Germans. So did the deterioration of material conditions, bordering on outright famine in many towns and cities, especially as winter approached. Finally,

German failure to satisfy popular aspirations in such crucial areas as the dissolution of collective farms alienated the peasantry from their new masters.

By the end of 1941 the early willingness of the Soviet population in the occupied areas to be shown that the Germans were bringing them a better order was vanishing. Disillusionment turned into hostility when, during the winter of 1941-42, the German advance not only came to a standstill but also the Red Army momentarily regained the initiative and returned to the attack. The protraction of the war and the Soviet counterattack brought about a severe deterioration in German matériel and morale and, indirectly, increased the amount of goods and services commandeered from the indigenous population. All of these facts undermined the myth of German invincibility in the minds of the population which, both in overt behavior and often subconsciously, too, sought to join the stronger of the two contending powers. German victory was no longer sure; previous experiences of Soviet rule suggested that there might be retribution for collaborating with the invaders; the German behavior was worsening; for all these reasons the population began to change its attitude.

By early 1942 the many elements who had sought to escape a choice by simply standing pat were gradually forced to take sides. Though the initial disillusionment was unconnected with it, the emergence of the partisan movement in some degree intensified the spiral of increased terror and counterterror in whose midst the population (particularly in the rural areas) was soon caught up. Only from early 1942 on, after the initial two traumatic experiences—the shock of Soviet displacement and defeat, leading to the substitution of German authority; and the shock of experience with the Germans, the failure to win, and the German failure to satisfy popular grievances—was partisan activity significant.

B. EARLY STAGE OF THE PARTISAN MOVEMENT

In its first months of existence the partisan movement, rapidly established or improvised before the Soviet retreat, lacked popular support—a fact of which not only the German but even the Soviet authorities were well aware. The partisans were commonly looked upon by the population as desperadoes fighting for a lost cause, or as professional Communists having a stake in the regime. On the other hand, here and there rank-and-file peasants would help partisans hiding in neighboring woods with food, clothes, or information, sometimes because they were "our people," speaking the same language and sharing the same background, as distinguished from the foreigners who had come to Russian soil. More often such assistance sprang not out of admiration or sympathy for the partisans' activities and goals but simply from the fact that they were Russian human beings and in need of help, the same sort of help extended to stragglers from the Red Army.

Soon the sparsity of German troops permitted groups of partisans, even if they were small and none too well armed, to raid individual villages far from German garrisons. At first, they would perhaps infiltrate singly and establish contacts with remaining agents and sympathizers; later, they might come in force. Usually, the rural population would look upon these sallies as unwelcome nuisances; sometimes, they would take active measures to protect themselves; only rarely would they wholeheartedly join the budding partisan groups. At other times, individual would-be partisans abandoned their groups and returned to live in the villages as civilians, just as the Army stragglers sought to submerge themselves among the remaining indigenous population.

Initial hostility toward the partisans in the village arose for several reasons. The bands represented an unwelcomed intrusion in a situation where the' peasantry strove hard for a return to normalcy and for freedom from interference by any and all authorities. So the partisans were resented as much as the Soviet authorities, the Germans, or any other form of power. Also, the

partisans sought to exact help in goods and services from the population, thereby doing violence to the acquisitiveness of the rural residents, which had grown after the change of regimes. Finally, the partisans by their existence and activity produced a sense of insecurity which made the civilians realize (1) the Germans' inability to extend effective protection to them, and (2) the continued vigilance of the Soviet authorities or their lieutenants on the spot, in whose eyes all those who complied with German orders were collaborators with the enemy and *ipso facto* traitors.

The Germans were generally in no position to take action against partisan groups in the first period of the war. Not only were there too few security troops, but also many of the indigenous reports reaching them about partisan activities were dismissed as alarmist and fictitious; indeed, more often than not, when the Germans attempted to ferret out the partisans, they would refuse to give battle, retire to concealed positions, and leave the Germans and the population resentful and distrustful of each other. The population tended to become depressed because of their inability to get away from the partisans (as representatives of Soviet authority), especially when the signs multiplied that the focus of Soviet power, east of the battle line, was failing to dissolve under the German onslaught. At the same time, the partisans were still so few in 1941 that (many civilians reasoned) they could be eliminated; neither militarily nor politically were they yet so formidable a contingent as to be a menace. German failure to take prompt action permitted their growth; German failure to discriminate between partisans and civilians brought costly reprisals upon the heads of the civilians and exposed them to attacks and retributions from both sides; and German inability to satisfy the people's basic aspirations while inciting hatred of the partisans enabled the partisans to recruit members and agents among men and women who initially refused to support them.

By the spring of 1942 the bands in many areas had grown sufficiently strong to represent a permanent force, thanks to a combination of circumstances that included Soviet support, recruitment of local stragglers, change in the tenor of popular attitudes, and German setbacks.

From then on, popular attitudes developed along two distinct lines. On the one hand, the desire of the peasant to be left out of the struggle was enhanced by the double jeopardy to which he was subjected by partisan raids and German reprisals. Regardless of all politics, and often utterly rejecting all but the most obvious physical and material considerations (his own survival, and securing his property and stocks of produce and cattle), the civilian came to feel equally cold toward both sides. On the basis of the individual's own past experience, particularly in so far as the kolkhoz members were concerned, he rejected both Soviet treatment and policy and German attitudes and behavior as failing to satisfy his basic aspirations, be they for the welfare of his country, security, a high standard of living, peace of mind, cultural opportunities, or acquisition of property and symbols of prestige. Logically there could have been a third choice— neither Soviet nor German—but in practice this was not possible. However unreal this outlook, it was significant in that it was thus shaped by both political and apolitical factors, all of which increased the gulf between the individual (or the indigenous community) and the authorities, past and present.

Yet the very crystallization of feelings and behavior that contributed to neutralism also prevented increasingly wide circles of the population from practising it. Neutralism was the luxury that the occupation did not permit, at least not in those areas where partisan and antipartisan activities took place. Sooner or later everyone was exposed to the impact of external forces and had to take his stand on one side or the other. The motives that determined a person's choice varied from case to case, from area to area, but more often than not they arose from several major considerations: (1) his experiences with the Soviet regime—frustrations or satisfactions, all tending to be dimmed by the passage of time; (2) his experience with the Germans—the behavior

of individual soldiers and officials, requisitioning, forced labor, the fate of prisoners and of his own relatives; (3) his experience in the community during the occupation—the emergence of new administrative cadres, attempts to partition the collective farm, a new and strange order that perhaps brought some welcome relaxations but also abuse and new restrictions; (4) his experience with partisan and anti-partisan activities—raids, political rallies, requisitions, even pitched battles; burned-down houses and barns; sabotage of German facilities; assassination of collaborators; and public hanging of partisans and innocents; (5) his own desires, such as his quest for survival, his drive for advancement, his frustrated search for prestige and recognition, his inertia, his unwillingness to abandon the homestead; his desire for self-enrichment and his adventur-ousness.

The result of weighing these considerations seems usually to have been a greater alienation from the Germans than from the Russians, so that the population tended to throw in its lot with the partisans whenever there was a reasonably free choice.

[The attitude of the peasantry is reflected in the following report by a Russian rayon chief and collaborator, which, it is true, presents the situation from the occupiers' point of view but shows considerable insight:

In the struggle that the German Wehrmacht is waging against the partisans, the population cannot remain neutral, for, as the experiences of recent times show, a neutral attitude of the population leads to repressive measures from both sides and, in the end, to a destruction of the civilians by this or that side.

There can be no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the population is unequivocally hostile to the partisans and would be prepared to fight against them. This is quite natural, for the partisans rob, burn, murder, and prevent the development of a normal life. In addition, they declare themselves to be the representatives of the despised Bolshevik system. The population unanimously declares, "If there were no partisans, we could already live well, even while the war continues.' However, the peasantry is unfortunately placed in circumstances which compel it either to join the partisans directly or at any rate to give aid and comfort to them. .. .

When the peasant faces the problem whether to go with the partisans or with the German troops, unfortunately he must frequently observe that it is impossible to refuse help to the partisans. Indeed, he sees the partisans almost daily, and the Germans very seldom. Even if he wished to fight the partisans wholeheartedly, how should he do this? To throw himself into a direct struggle with them, unarmed as he is, is nonsense. Joining the OD means to deprive his land of the only manpower there is to work it and to expose his family to annihilation by the partisans. When the peasant follows the activity of the partisans and reports about it to the kom-mandantura, this fact rapidly becomes known, as almost nothing remains secret in the village, and retribution ensues swiftly. Moreover, the population has convinced itself that its reports [to the Germans] in the overwhelming majority of cases lead to no action whatever. The kommandanturas receive, day after day, reports about the partisans from all parts of the rayon but can react to them in only few instances, because they lack forces.

The above state of affairs is extremely dangerous, as it leads to the growth of the partisan movement and hence entails a complete disintegration of the [German] administrative and economic system. (FK[V]181, Abt. VII, "Auszugsweise Abschrift aus Lagebericht fuer die Zeit vom 1.-30. IX. 1942," 25 September 1942, GMDS, 201 ID 29196/4.)]

The partisans were the lesser evil. This choice was reinforced by Soviet and partisan psychological warfare, seeking to depict both the regime and its new assistants as patriotic, reformed, revitalized, and, by implication only, non-Communist.

It was also reinforced by stubborn German failure to appeal effectively to the population by offering a concrete political program and promises for the future. At the same time, the amalgam of elements determining the choice varied sufficiently to lead a smaller number of men to side definitely with the Germans (and the indigenous collaborators) against Soviet forces and partisans. A civil war was thus superimposed on a partisan war, and both raged in the shadow of the battle of the titans.

C. EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN GERMAN TACTICS

In the occupied areas, many of the same factors that fostered the growth of the partisan movement—notably the prolongation of the war, increased Soviet resistance, and German failure to win the civilian population to its side—also brought about, in the course of 1942, certain significant changes in German tactics, though not of goals or basic outlook. Their effect, paradoxically, tended in two opposite directions: some measures were aimed largely at enlisting popular support; others strove to help the German war economy and military operations regardless of the indigenous reaction. Several of these were most painful to the population caught between the German hammer and the partisan anvil.

One of the strongest sentiments among the peasantry in the occupied area was overwhelming rejection of the kolkhoz system, or at least of the compulsion and expropriation that characterized it. To people who felt like this, it was clearly disillusioning to find that the Germans sought to perpetuate, in one form or another, a system that seemed to be strikingly similar to that of the collective farms. It is true that, precisely where the partisans were strong (i.e., in the North and Center, rather than the South) the Germans, particularly in the areas of military government, were more inclined to acquiesce in the partition of kolkhoz property among its members. At times they even sought to exploit antikolkhoz sentiments for German ends. By the turn of the year (1942), pressure by partisans had become sufficiently substantial to endanger both peace and productivity; at the same time, as a means of reviving German prestige and stimulating indigenous initiative for the impending spring sowing, plans were drafted, discussed at length, and finally adopted for an agrarian reform. Enacted in February 1942, it was unevenly applied and in substance indicated only a nominal German movement away from the collective farm. The alternatives that the reform outlined were either purely theoretical or else resembled the earlier system so strongly as to reduce the actual effect considerably. Nevertheless, the reform itself, especially in the areas outside of the Ukraine, tended to improve the morale of the peasants and at times also their attitudes toward the Germans.

The help given by the agrarian reform to German popularity was more than offset by the large-scale forced labor program instituted in the summer of 1942. The compulsory transfer of millions of men to work in German industry, mining, and agriculture was accompanied by ugly instances of terror and abuse and left an indelible imprint on the population. It showed the Germans at their worst and associated them in the popular mind with the breaking up of families and the institution of slavery; everyone liable to be conscripted became more violently incensed than ever against the Germans, the collaborating police, and the civil administration that carried out their orders; the partisans were provided with considerable reinforcements, because many preferred joining the partisans to being deported to Germany; both the partisans and Soviet propagandists were supplied with another tangible object lesson to use effectively, and local agriculture, industry, and defense forces were deprived of some of their best actual or potential

manpower. In many ways, this program had the most direct and telling impact of all German measures, more striking than that of the occupation itself.

A third German change of tactics consisted in recruiting indigenous collaborators not merely for police but for antipartisan and paramilitary duties. This was to some extent a response to the increase in partisan strength, coupled with German realization that (1) the Germans themselves were unable to provide the necessary forces to inflict a fatal blow on the partisans, and (2) it was also politically wise to provide the indigenous population with a channel and institution for the expression of active anti-partisan sentiments. There was little difficulty in recruiting the necessary personnel; however, their moral and intellectual caliber was frequently low. The net effect of the formation of indigenous collaborator units is difficult to assess. On the one hand, it tended to establish a closer bond of identification between the population and the Germans; on the other, frequent abuses by the collaborators, and the not inappropriate label of mercenaries that was often attached to them, alienated them from the civilian masses. However, the very establishment of indigenous units, even under German command and with severe limitations, involved in some measure a new departure from the original *Untermensch* outlook. In some individual instances, German army commanders experimentally granted collaborating chieftains even more far-reaching autonomy than before, as long as they followed the general precepts and military directives of the occupying forces. Though such a German tactical retreat from colonization may have been militarily important, and may have tended to increase popular good will, its psychological effect may be judged to have been less significant than the sum total of negative experiences.

The military aspect of antipartisan warfare constituted the fourth important innovation in German tactics. Beginning in the spring and summer of 1942, the first larger antipartisan operations were conducted, in the Yelnya and Bryansk areas, for instance. Their military effect was frequently to weaken, but only rarely to destroy, a given partisan concentration. Since the German and indigenous forces fighting the partisans could not remain in the areas being combed, the partisans could soon return to their former areas and resume their work, though often crippled in matériel and reduced in manpower. The operations, however, often involved wholesale evacuations of civilians by the Germans, and wholesale reprisals for alleged concealment of, and assistance to, the partisans. It seems that among the victims of these operations there were more innocent civilians than actual partisans or even partisan-helpers. The effect of the antipartisan operations was once again twofold: it strengthened the pro-German and decidedly anti-German elements, but, especially in the areas directly affected, drove most of the neutral population into the hands of the partisans. They seemed more discriminating in their terror tactics against innocent civilians; they spoke the same language (literally and at times figuratively) as the population; and more and more they appeared to the people as supporters of the victorious side.

[Another subsidiary factor was the behavior of the Axis troops fighting with the Germans. While less given to wholesale extermination, they aroused widespread hostility by their wanton looting, theft, and abuse.]

Thus the total effect of German measures adopted in the crucial year of 1942 was to further the cleavage of the population into hostile camps, with a minority rallying decisively around the Germans and the collaborators and a greater number turning against the Germans. In this polarization, the partisans played an important part.

D. SUMMER 1942—FALL 1943

The year from the late summer of 1942—when the partisan movement had become consolidated as a force to be reckoned with and had organizationally realized its full potential—to the summer and fall of 1943 saw the remaining civilians on occupied soil caught between two fronts. Their attitudes and behavior were determined by several new and important considerations.

Military developments unrelated to the partisan movement played a role. German victories in the latter half of 1942 were largely in the south, precisely the area where the partisans were weakest or nonexistent. In the north and center of the Eastern front, the situation remained substantially unchanged, thus deflating German hopes and promises that, say, Moscow and Leningrad would soon fall. In the area where the partisans were active, the German victories were of little consequence, while the ensuing debacle at Stalingrad and its impact on the entire German structure in the East was considerable. It unnerved the Germans, weakened them physically, and strengthened and encouraged the partisans. Even though some elements, especially collaborators, continued to believe that Stalin was bound to lose the war—a sort of rationalization and wishful thinking for which the Germans were largely responsible because of their biased reporting—the prevalent feeling was that the tide had turned.

In this period one can divide the territory behind the German front into three fairly distinct areas : of effective German control, of partisan domination, and of shifting control. The tremendous expansion of the partisan movement in early 1942 had taken place in those areas where crucial support was available: Soviet help in supplies, manpower, radio contact, air support, and intelligence; stragglers from the Red Army; and finally— an essential for partisan survival— some measure of support from the indigenous civilians. By early spring 1942 whole areas were nominally under partisan control; in the Bryansk area even small towns, such as Dyatkovo and Trubchevsk, fell into their hands, though generally the partisan-held areas were restricted to rural and especially forest districts. Initially, the civilians who found themselves in these areas had little choice. They were generally obliged to adjust to partisan rule and make the best of it, for only individual residents either wanted to or could abandon their homes and escape to German-held areas.

With the passage of time, the civilians in the partisan districts came to identify themselves more closely with their new masters. The survival of the partisans became a prerequisite of their own survival, since their fate was certain should the Germans reoccupy the area. In this manner, German tactics contributed to the closer relationship between partisans and people. It was not so much the product of great affection or admiration, though such sentiments may have developed at times; rather, it could be characterized as "an involuntary marriage, with no chance of divorce except by suicide." Moreover, direct and daily contact with the partisans enabled the peasants to establish personal relations with them. They were exposed to intensive Soviet propaganda which consequently strove to convince the civilians that things had changed, or at least would change after the war, and to satisfy some of their more obvious patriotic, agrarian, and religious aspirations. With German influence uprooted, with collaborators exterminated, and Soviet institutions and procedures revived, there is little doubt that the surviving civilians in the areas more or less permanently held by the partisans did, willy-nilly, again come to consider themselves subject to the regularly established authority of Moscow, represented by the partisans and the partisan-sponsored administration. There is no evidence of any major civilian revolts or outbreaks against partisan rule, even though resentment against requisitions, recruitment, and reinstitution of Soviet practices can be assumed to have been widespread.

Such areas of thorough partisan control, however, while increasing in size and strength, covered only a fraction of the territory behind the German front. It may be a fair estimate to say that no more than one million civilians, and probably fewer, lived in all of them combined. The areas

gradually spread but were limited chiefly to the Bryansk forests, the Polotsk-Lepel district, around Bobruisk, and the southwestern part of Leningrad Oblast.

A far greater number of people lived in what may be called the twilight zones where neither Germans nor partisans held permanent sway. In some instances, German garrisons would have nominal control, but partisans would be able effectively to raid and take reprisals by night; in others, neither side had sufficient forces to command constant popular obedience. Generally, the Germans would only occasionally send in troops and civilian officials to recruit forced labor, round up food, or simply conduct reconnaissance. Though life under either German or partisan rule was fairly unpleasant, it was generally secure; to live in the twilight zone exposed a resident to requisitioning by both Germans and partisans, and to reprisals from either (or both) for collaborating with the other; even refusal to work with one granted no immunity from punishment by the other. Collaborators of the Germans were able to carry on only under great difficulty, often escaping to the nearest rayon centers or hiding at night in the fields to avoid partisan retribution; partisan helpers were generally more secure because they remained unknown to the Germans. German terror tactics were frequently indiscriminate, while partisans sought to attract those elements to their side who could be expected to desert the German cause.

The net result was that the civilian population in these border areas was worst off, being caught, sometimes literally, between two fires. With the passage of time, and the greater ability of the partisans to "get away" with their activities, popular attitudes swung, if not in their favor, in the direction of accepting them as the stronger and somewhat more predictable of the two authorities.

The German-held areas tended to be limited, more and more, to the towns and cities, garrisoned points, and villages along the major arteries of communication. Here, by and large, the population was secure from partisan activities, except for occasional raids, but was aware of their existence as well as of the work of the Soviet underground; in addition, Soviet and partisan agents engaged in extensive infiltration, provocation, and sabotage even in areas where there were no combat partisans. The civilian population was again subjected to double pressure. German requisitioning, forced labor programs, and other abuses were frequent and drove civilians into active opposition. On the other hand, to those people who lived quietly and "normally," the partisans loomed as the outsiders seeking to disrupt a fairly stable, albeit imperfect, order. Thus fear of the partisans pervaded some of these areas, fear heightened by the fact that they were most ruthless in dealing with the population outside the localities they controlled. It is curious that one of the more perspicacious Soviet women-agents, whose reports are available, noted some time in 1942 that:

in those areas where the partisans are not active, the people are against them. In the imagination of the population the partisans are like bandits and robbers. There were instances where small groups of partisans (five to seven men) raided villages. In these cases the people, especially the men, fled from the villages in panic. Even where there were only false rumors that partisans were coming, the men ran from the villages.

[299. Inf.Div., Ic, "Uebersetzung der Eintragungen im Notizbuch einer Partisanin und Agentin, die . . . am Morgen des 13.10. auf der Flucht erschossen wurde," 14 October 1942 (GMDS, 299 ID 28102/10, Anlage 53). It is evident from the text that the woman was an agent and not a partisan.]

While the areas immune from partisans decreased in 1942-43 in the entire forest zone—roughly the entire occupied territory south to the northern Ukraine—the central and southern Ukraine and the adjacent areas to the East (i.e., in late 1942, the plains extending as far as the Stalingrad and

Kuban area, and parts of the North Caucasus) were relatively free of partisans. This suggests an important consideration: In the Ukraine, the extremes of the policy pursued by the Germans antagonized the population there as much as, or even more than, anywhere else; this hostility (which, in some of the western sections of the republic, found expression in the formation of nationalist Ukrainian bands) developed without reference to, or support from, the Soviet partisans. Thus the presence of the partisans was not a prerequisite for the crystallization of popular hostility toward the Germans. At the same time, in the North Caucasus, where an attempt was made to establish a partisan movement in a propitious terrain, it failed to flourish; though various reasons (including the lack of time and the lack of stragglers) were responsible for this failure, one significant factor was the distinctively more lenient policy adopted by the Germans. One may conclude that the success or failure of the partisan movement in terms of attracting rank-and-file popular support was importantly influenced by the policy pursued by the antipartisan forces.

[On the Ukraine, see Armstrong; see also this book, Chap. X, Sect. II.]

In general, the period of 1942-43 witnessed a further and conclusive decline in pro-German attitudes, even where the partisans were weak or nonexistent. By the middle of 1943, one may assume, the hostility had become so strong and widespread as to be ineluctable, whatever the Germans did. With only minor variations between different social and nationality groups, the change of attitude that had taken place between the fall of 1941 and the early months of 1943 is attributable in large measure to German conduct—sins of commission *(Ostarbeiter,* antipartisan terror) and sins of omission (agrarian reform, famine); it was also affected by the gradual rise of Soviet strength and prestige, to which the partisans contributed, as did the Soviet victories and the successful exploitation of national-patriotic sentiments in Soviet and partisan propaganda.

These conditions were exploited and accentuated by the partisans in the areas over which they ruled or for which they vied. German inability to protect civilians in fringe areas increased the myth of partisan strength; so did the militarily nonsensical but psychologically effective operations of the raiding bands that crisscrossed the Ukraine in early 1943.

At the same time, the promises and threats made by the partisans to the civilians, and especially collaborators, in the twilight areas—and the partisans' ability to carry them out—tended to set them above the Germans in the awe (and/or fear) in which they were held by the population.

E. 1943-44

At this late date, German occupation policy underwent some further changes intended largely to mollify popular sentiments and to anchor the allegiance of those who were still pro-German. A decree in June 1943 provided for the recognition of private peasant ownership of land; greater tolerance in educational, cultural, and religious matters prevailed; some attempts were made to cater to national sentiments; for propaganda purposes, the so-called first Vlasov operation was initiated, making use of the names and prestige of Soviet defector generals; special privileges were pledged to Red Army and partisan personnel who voluntarily deserted to the Germans. At the same time, somewhat more realistic appraisals of the partisans and somewhat more effective techniques of antipartisan warfare began to be employed. All of these, however, may be considered to have been too little and too late. The basic outlook and practices of the occupation forces did not change.

It remains a matter of speculation whether at that stage a dramatic and radical departure from past dogma and practice could have produced a significant change in popular attitudes in the so-

called "occupied Eastern territories." Whether or not it might have, no such fundamental change was permitted by the top Nazi leadership.

The German offensive in the summer of 1943 boomeranged into a large-scale retreat; first the Soviet troops advanced to Stalino, Bryansk, Smolensk and other eastern outposts; then a new offensive placed them at the Dnepr along a front extending approximately over Kiev, Gomel, and Vitebsk. These victories shattered the remaining prestige of German military might and valor in the eyes of the population. At the same time, the Axis position was wrecked by the fall of Mussolini, Western landings in Italy, and intensified bombing of the Reich. All these events were widely exploited in Soviet propaganda. While it continued its "national" line by such measures as the dissolution of the Comintern, the re-establishment of officers' shoulder insignia, and the revival of the Moscow Patriarchate, it confirmed what was presented as a democratic alliance by such outward demonstrations as the Teheran Conference. The same elements that seemed to impress Western public opinion also seemed to influence the civilian population under German rule.

From late 1943 to the end of the occupation, one can scarcely speak of systematic German policy. In its place, there was a somewhat frantic and at times hysterical attempt to evacuate manpower and equipment, to use all available civilians to dig ditches, clear roads, build fortifications, and before abandoning them to clear entire stretches of territory of men and matériel. The wind sowed by the Soviets in their scorched-earth policy of 1941 was reaping a German whirlwind. If anything, these extreme measures, adopted when everything seemed to be lost, tended further to antagonize the civilian population. The partisans were now fully conscious that Soviet victory was around the corner. Feeling their strength, they could afford to make all sorts of promises in order to induce collaborators to defect.

At the same time, by attacking trains and retreating columns on a large scale, and seeking to prevent the evacuation of civilians, they interfered with German retrograde movements. The easternmost partisans were swept up by the advancing Red Army; other partisan groups moved westward where they achieved a greater density; finally, the Germans were compelled to withdraw their remaining garrisons from all but the most important centers and highways.

Popular attitudes were fairly well set by this time. There was a core of collaborators who either had decided—out of fear, hate, or other motives— that, come what might, they would not return to the Soviet side, or had found neither opportunity nor courage to join the partisans. There were those who had resigned themselves to the return of Soviet rule and looked upon the partisans as its precursors. And there were those who acclaimed the partisans and the Red Army as the liberators. That the partisans, to the bitter end, continued to evoke mixed sentiments and even hostility was borne out by the last-minute German attempt to establish "self-defense villages" in which the peasants, at last permitted to carry arms and organize, would seek by their own power to ward off partisan raids. Even in the spring of 1944 this measure served to boost popular morale in various parts of Belorussia by instilling in the civilian population a sense of self-rule and strength, a feeling that it was able to protect its material goods and command the respect of any and all outsiders.

More characteristic for this last stage, however, were large-scale defections from collaborator units to the partisans (which led to the transfer of all paramilitary formations westward in late 1943) and mass breakouts from the German-sponsored treks of evacuees.

[It must be stressed, however, that the number of collaborators remained considerable to the very end. Thus, there were at least 40,000 men in the OD (auxiliary police) in the area of Army

Group Center alone; in addition, there were sizable contingents of military units, army auxiliaries, and the entire gamut of civilian collaborators and officials.]

Equally typical was the attempt of many civilians, foreseeing an early Soviet return, to procure themselves an alibi or record of active anti-German activity by conducting sabotage, killing German officials, or joining the partisans. The situation was entirely oriented on the coming Soviet victory. By the middle of 1944 this prospect had become reality throughout the old Soviet territories.

F. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES UNDER THE OCCUPATION

When the Red Army returned, it found villages that had often changed not only in appearance but also in the kinds of people that now inhabited them. During the course of the occupation a typical village, if it was located in an area of partisan activity, might have undergone the following changes in demographic composition. A large percentage of the able-bodied males was mobilized into the Red Army; a far smaller number, including officials and technicians, were evacuated eastward before the Soviet withdrawal. This loss of manpower was only partly made up by the influx of three elements during the first stage of the occupation: refugees from other parts of the occupied areas, stragglers from Red Army units cut off or destroyed by the Germans, and urban residents seeking sustenance and safety in the countryside. During the subsequent period the excess of mortality over births, as well as deaths from starvation and epidemics, further reduced the population figure. Statistically more significant were the departures from the village; a small number of men who went to work as collaborators of the Germans elsewhere, perhaps a larger number of stragglers who were apprehended by the Germans, a few persons who voluntarily joined the partisans, and, largest of all, those people who were conscripted for forced labor in Germany. Finally, partisan recruitment was stepped up, especially in the latter part of the occupation. When the Germans retreated, a number of villagers were evacuated with them, notably collaborating officials, local auxiliary police, kulaks, and some rank-and-file ex-kolkholz members. Thus, when the Red Army returned two or three years later, the population may have been only one fourth of the 1941 figure, the preponderance being old persons, women, and small children. Naturally there were different statistical changes in parts of the occupied areas where partisans were weak or where the occupation did not last long, as there were in areas firmly held by the partisans.

G. MOTIVES BEHIND POPULAR ATTITUDES

Even more difficult to summarize simply than shifts in demographic composition are the motives behind all the complex and varying manifestations of pro- and antipartisan activity. Many of these motives have been alluded to earlier. Some of the population's help for the bands was voluntary, some forced. Some acceptance was tacit and passive, some explicit and active. Obviously, perhaps, where the partisans were strongest (or the Germans absent) and where local experience of the German occupation was most horrible, the partisans were most successful in gaining popular support; they were perhaps particularly fortunate where a sizable indigenous element existed in the local partisan force. Though until the end the partisans were often regarded unfavorably as the long arm of Moscow, they appeared less like "Communist die-hards" and "bandits" as the composition of the movement changed and as experience with the Germans strengthened the belief that the partisans were preferable.

Popular acceptance of the partisans varied to some extent with the social, national, and age groups involved. Those social elements most likely to accept the partisans were absent; most Soviet officials, administrators, and Communist enthusiasts were evacuated to the East, or drafted into the Army, or were themselves partisans. By and large the stragglers were initially

anxious to merge with the indigenous population and be left in peace; though some had been cut off and isolated much against their will and were prepared to continue the fight if and when an opportunity arose (as they did with the partisan movement in the winter of 1941-42), most tended to consider the war as lost, themselves as delinquent in Soviet (though not in their own) eyes, and the whole occupation as a situation in which they preferred to be as inconspicuous as possible. The kulaks and the clergy, who, after a decade of repression, reappeared on the scene, and the criminal elements for whom the German occupation brought a heyday, were of course hostile to the partisans.

The urban population, partly because of its closer, earlier identification with the Soviet regime, partly because of the more miserable conditions of life and work in the towns under the Germans, was inclined to turn against the occupying authorities sooner and more decisively than the rural population (though there were many exceptions); yet, paradoxically, the partisan movement was largely a rural phenomenon, and urban dissidents either remained isolated or joined Communist underground groups in the towns. Only in relatively few instances did they escape to join the partisans. In the countryside, the peasants were originally reluctant to side with the partisans; as described above, when they later turned increasingly against the Germans, they wasted little love on the partisans though generally supporting them when they had to make a choice.

Nationality played virtually no role in the Russian and Belorussian areas. Only in the Crimea and the North Caucasus did it influence the composition of the partisan movement itself or the relations of partisans to civilians. In the Baltic States, to be sure, it was of considerable importance; this area, however, was not studied in the context of this chapter. In the Ukraine, a paradoxical situation arose in which (1) there were few Soviet partisans, largely because of the terrain, though the Communist urban underground was active in a number of towns and cities; (2) anti-German sentiment was considerable; (3) there was, especially in certain parts of the republic, a measure of nationalism that contributed not only to anti-German but also to anti-Great Russian (and anti-Polish) sentiment; but (4) most nationalism was strong in circles of the intelligentsia rather than among the peasantry, who usually provided the cadres for the partisan movement. Unquestionably, some people disliked the partisans because they seemed to be emissaries and agents of Moscow; on the other hand, except perhaps in Volhy-nia, Galicia, and other scattered parts of the Ukraine, national sentiments were not so profound as to influence decisions more than did other and more basic motives, such as sheer survival, improvement in standards of living, the experience of relatives with the Germans, and dissatisfaction with German policy toward the collective farm.

In the last analysis, the decision to side with Germans or partisans seems commonly to have been determined by the individual's wartime experience —not by abstract considerations and evaluations of the merits and demerits of the two regimes, nor even necessarily by likes and dislikes or experiences under the Soviet regime before the occupation—and also by the accident of which regime was the stronger and happened to control a given area. At the same time, nonmaterial and nonpersonal factors also had some influence. The existence of the *Wehrdoerjer* (armed villages), some local self-government, the Kaminsky Brigade, and the separatist bands suggests that the Germans had an opportunity to exploit desires and political aspirations broader than the customary grievances within the peasants' sphere of life. Yet they never produced an articulate or distinctive political program for the peasantry. The Soviet authorities, for their part, and the partisans with them, managed successfully to evoke and play upon wider and deeper emotions, like patriotism and anticolonialism. Though neither side offered an appreciably improved standard of living, in the way of expectation of future security and present satisfaction with the value of one's role as a participant in current events the partisans had more to offer than did the Germans.

H. CONCLUSIONS

Thus the partisans contributed to the crystallization of public opinion, and especially of public action, in the occupied areas. As in the Ukraine, they were not always the cause but often the effect of anti-German sentiments. At the same time, they influenced popular attitudes and eventually decisions by (a) physically controlling the lives and destinies of a small group of civilians; (b) constantly reminding the population of the continual presence and watchful eye of the Soviet regime; (c) playing the part of avengers and thus blocking collaboration with the Germans; (d) provoking German terror and retaliation, so that many civilians were induced to look upon the occupation forces as the greater of the two evils; and (e) both acting as a catalyst and providing a real opportunity for effective action, in giving those who wished to fight or to escape the Germans a stimulus and a chance to do so with relative ease.

The partisan organization constituted a model example of an involuntary resistance movement. It did not begin as a popular mass revolt; it could not have developed without Soviet help and direction. Nor could it have succeeded without sooner or later winning considerable numbers of the population to its side. That it did so is explained in some measure by its own tactics and behavior, but to a much greater degree by circumstances beyond its control.

CHAPTER V The Partisans in Soviet Intelligence

Kurt DeWitt

§I. Relations Between the Partisans and Soviet Intelligence

Although partisan warfare on the Eastern front during the Second World War has been recognized as a factor which contributed to the German defeat in Russia, one feature of the Soviet partisan movement which has received little attention was its integration with the Soviet Intelligence system. The purpose of this chapter, a by-product of an intensive investigation of the partisan movement in the Belorussian-Great Russian area, is to describe the intelligence activities of the Soviet partisans. These activities will be discussed both as a special aspect of partisan warfare and in terms of their contribution to the operations of Soviet Intelligence. The methods employed by the partisans in gathering intelligence for their own purposes are naturally of interest, but what is far more significant is that the partisans supplied Soviet Intelligence with a vast reservoir of agents and informants behind the German lines.

During the early phase of the war apparently little or no formal cooperation existed between the partisans and Soviet Intelligence as far as intelligence operations were concerned. This, at least, was the opinion of *Fremde Heere Ost,* which in 1943 began to study partisan warfare and to publish a series of reports on the partisan situation in the entire Eastern theater entitled *Bulletins on Partisan Warfare (Nachrichten ueber den Bandenkrieg).* In No. 1 of this series we find a rather categorical statement to the effect that early in the war partisan and Soviet agents were strictly separated:

During the first period of the war no relations existed between partisans and Soviet Intelligence, and [Soviet] intelligence scouts and agents were not even permitted to establish contact with the bands; now [1943], however, it is possible to observe in increasing measure a cooperation between them which takes the form of assigning to the bands the task of gathering information in areas dominated by them. . .

*[*OKH/GenStdH/FHO, *Nachrichten ueber den Bandenkrieg Nr. 1,* 3 May 1943, p. 3 (GMDS, H 3/738) [hereafter cited as *Nachrichten].]*

This statement is supported by information found in some of the German field reports, like the 339th Infantry Division report which deals with the capture of several Soviet parachute agents in October 1941: "The group in question is one of four parachutist groups which had orders to engage in espionage behind the German front without contacting partisans or other elements and to report regularly by radio on troop movements and weather conditions. Their wireless set was of American origin. . . ."

[339. Inf.Div., Ic, "Taetigkeitsbericht," 8 August 1942, p. 7 (GMDS, 339 ID 22441/7).]

In July 1942 three other Soviet agents were arrested who had also been dropped by plane and had been instructed not to work for or with the partisans. They were told of the presence of a large partisan band located in their drop area but, "in case of encounter with this band, they were allowed to established contact, but they were strictly forbidden to work with or for the band. .. ."

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Betr.: 3 Funk-Agenten (Fallschirmabspringer)," 24 July 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, 221 ID 29380/9, Anlage 16).]

Nevertheless, in the form cited above, the statement of *Fremde Heere Ost* appears to be an oversimplification. There is some evidence that Soviet agents cooperated with the partisans even before 1943, as is indicated, for example, by a report of the Provost Marshal General of the German Army *(Heeresfeldpolizeichef)* summarizing the partisan situation during the period from July 1942 to March 1943: "Parachutist groups no longer acted exclusively on their own but for the most part joined existing bands and carried out the missions given them (intelligence missions, sabotage against particularly important military objects, etc.) with the help of the bands... ."

[HFPCh/im OKH/Gen.z.b.V./H.Wes.Abt./GFP, "Allgemeiner Ueberblick ueber die Bandenbewegung fuer die Zeit vom 1.7.1942—31.3.1943," 10 April 1943, p. 4 (GMDS, OKW/734).]

On the other hand, the policy of keeping Soviet agents away from the partisans seems to have been in effect even later. A report of Sixteenth Army of January 1943 said: "All agent groups operating in the rear of the enemy are strictly separated from the partisan movement. They are forbidden to cooperate with the bands.. . ."

[AOK 16, Ic/AO, "Beurteilung der Bandenlage," 6 January 1943, p. 1 (GMDS, AOK 16, 36588/142).]

This was even more true of the above-mentioned Special Groups of the Red Army. According to No. 9 of the *Bulletins on Partisan Warfare,* they were "independent groups which are subordinate to the Intelligence Section (2d Section) of the Red Army. They operate independently of the bands in the rear of the German front. . . ."

[*Nachrichten Nr. 9,* 11 June 1944, p. 2.]

The German reports do not indicate why the Soviets kept their intelligence operatives away from the partisans. One motive obviously was security—the necessity of protecting agents by making their presence and missions known to as few people as possible. Another motive may have arisen from a basic principle of Soviet intelligence operations to which reference has previously been made; namely, to cover a particular target by different sets of agents who work completely independent of each other. In practice, this principle of separation seems to have been violated

frequently by agents who lost their bearings or otherwise got into trouble and fell back on the partisans for help.

The fact that the partisans in the early phase of the war apparently had little formal contact with Soviet Intelligence personnel does not imply that there was no cooperation between the two. The report of the Provost Marshal General on the partisan situation during the second half of 1941 indicates that the bands even at that time performed certain intelligence jobs for the Red Army. For instance, the partisans were known to have been entrusted with:

. . . destruction of telephone and radio communications trucks, passenger cars, motorcycle messengers, other motorcyclists, cyclists, messengers on horseback and on foot. Every means must be used to transmit papers taken from messengers and all other captured documents and information to the nearest staff headquarters of the Red Army or to higher partisan headquarters.

With all means and forces at our disposal, information must be gathered concerning the enemy: his activities; the continuity and location of his frontline positions; his tanks, artillery, air force, other troop units, and location of headquarters staffs. This intelligence must be forwarded to the front units of the Red Army.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt.K.Verw., "Erfahrungen ueber Aufbau, Aufgaben, Auftreten und Bekaempfung der Partisanenabteilungen," 15 January 1942, p. 37 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.717).]

From 1942 on the German reports refer more frequently and more explicitly to the utilization of the partisans for Soviet Intelligence. A counterintelligence summary of Eleventh Army dated 14 March 1942 is prefaced by the statement: "The activities of Soviet Intelligence and the partisans often overlap to a considerable extent. Therefore, it is necessary to suspect espionage in connection with any partisan activity and to assume that espionage suspects are also engaged in partisan activities."

[AOK 11, AO, "Abwehrnachrichten Nr. 4," 14 March 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, AOK 11, 35774/10).]

A report of Second Panzer Army on the partisan situation in the Bryansk area in April 1942 speaks of greater coordination of efforts between the bands and the Red Army, noticeable also in the field of intelligence: "In the first week of April, for example, about 750 men were filtered through the front to join the partisans. In addition, the espionage and intelligence net is being steadily widened and more elaborately organized. .. ."

[PzAOK 2, Abwehrgruppe, "Auszug aus den Berichten ueber die Partisanenlage im Gebiet zwischen Front und Brjansk vom Gen.Kdo. des XXXXVII. Pz. Korps," 26 April 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 30233/66).]

This, according to the report, was but one aspect of Soviet attempts to step up partisan warfare as part of their over-all military effort. The greater utilization of specially trained partisans brought into the rear area by planes was also noted. These partisans not only had special sabotage missions as well as orders to reinforce local bands, but also had the task of collecting information for Soviet Intelligence and of transmitting this information immediately by radio.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/GFP, "Entwicklung der Partisanenbewegung in der Zeit vom 1.1.—30.6.1942," 31 July 1942, p. 15 (GMDS, HGr Nord 75131/ 113).]

The growth in partisan intelligence activities coincided in time with increased Soviet air support for the partisans. In fact, airpower became a highly useful tool of partisan intelligence, just as it was a very important factor in the Soviet reorganization of the partisan movement in the beginning of 1942. One is almost forced to conclude that the increasing utilization of the partisans for Soviet intelligence purposes was not an isolated phenomenon but was rather the direct result of, and one of the motives behind, the reorganization which was designed to bring about greater effectiveness of the partisans and a closer integration of the movement into the Soviet war effort. When the Soviets ordered a further intensification of partisan warfare during the winter of 1942-43, one of their principal objectives apparently was an increased flow of intelligence for the Red Army and NKVD. An intelligence report of Second Panzer Army, stationed in the Bryansk area, commented in detail on Soviet measures undertaken during the winter of 1942-43 to step up partisan warfare and mentioned some of the specific tasks to be accomplished:

Further measures to increase the striking power of the bands: (aa) Organization of a special intelligence service for the bands' own use. For this, Communist Party members are to be employed who must infiltrate leading positions in the OD *[Ordnungsdienst,* the German-run indigenous police force], (bb) Closer cooperation between regular agents and bands. . . .

[PzAOK 2, Ic/AO III, "Abwehrblatt Nr. 1/43," 14 January 1943, p. 3 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 75915).]

The report of the Provost Marshal General for the period from July 1942 to March 1943 states: "The number of partisan agents has increased parallel with the reorganization and strengthening of the bands. They form the main contingent of persons arrested on suspicion of espionage."

[HFPCh im OKH/Gen.z.b.V./H.Wes.Abt./GFP, "Allgemeiner Ueberblick ueber die Bandenbewegung fuer die Zeit vom 1.7.1942—31.3.1943," 10 April 1943, p. 6 (GMDS, OKW/734).]

The Panchenko band, uncovered by the Germans in early 1943 after months of investigation, furnishes a particularly striking example of partisans serving Soviet Intelligence. It was credited by the Germans with having played a highly significant role in the Soviet military intelligence network on the Bryansk and Southwest Fronts:

An investigation of partisan activities in Mikhailovka Rayon (SSE of Dmi-trovsk) which was started in July 1942 led to the uncovering of the Panchenko band. Several actions to break up this band failed, and the investigation, under the direction of a chief informant and conducted on a stepped-up scale in connection with Operation "Polar Bear" in January 1943, resulted in an entirely new evaluation of this group. The analysis and comparison of the extensive results of the investigation available so far indicate that the Panchenko band must be credited with an importance which goes far beyond the previously known or recognized scope of partisan activity.

[Abwehrtrupp 107 to PzAOK 2, Ic/AO III, "Bande Pantschenko im System des Nachrichtendienstes der Brjansker-Front und der Suedwest-Front," 5 February 1943, p. 1 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 75915).]

Evidently the Germans recognized the real character and mission of this particular partisan band only after its detection, and the report makes it quite clear that they had never before observed partisan intelligence activities on such a scale and in such close liaison with the Red Army.

Documents dated 1944 indicate that the Soviet High Command relied increasingly on partisan intelligence. An SD report of 1 March 1944 may serve as an illustration: "The location of the partisan center of gravity has significant connections with [Soviet] operational intentions and undertakings. ... To some extent regular Soviet troops are mixed with partisan units in which cases the Soviet military leaders are utilizing the partisans' precise knowledge of the localities and the results of their intelligence work."

[Chef Sipo. u. SD, IV D 5, "Kurzbericht ueber die Lage und Taetigkeit in den besetzten Ostgebieten," 1 March 1944, p. 2 (GMDS, EAP 99/1104).]

The available materials do not present a clear picture of the channels of command and reporting between the partisans and Soviet Intelligence. Apparently, the partisans started to gather combat intelligence for the Red Army even during the first few months of the war, but there is no evidence that the Soviet leadership had, prior to the war, worked out plans and procedures for the utilization of the partisans in the field of intelligence. Regular Soviet agents were under orders to keep away from the bands, partly, it appears, because the Soviet authorities initially had little control over the bands and did not want to expose their trained intelligence personnel to unnecessary risks. These considerations lost weight after the Soviet authorities had established closer control over the partisan movement.

From the beginning of 1942 the partisans were drawn closer into the Soviet Intelligence network, and there are indications that by the winter of 1942-43 a formal chain of command had been worked out between the NKVD and Red Army on one side, and the partisan staffs on the other, at least for military intelligence purposes. [See Fig. 4.] Partisans were given special training in Soviet intelligence schools. The communications system of the partisans, particularly their radio transmitters, served as an important, and often the only, link between Soviet agents and the outside.

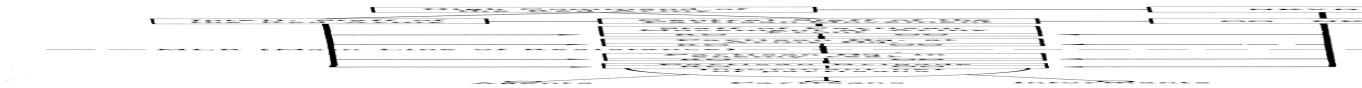

***Figure 4.*—Cooperation between partisans and Soviet intelligence. *Source: OKH/-GenStdH/FHO, Nachri chten ueber den Bandenkrieg Nr. 1,* 3 May 1943, Anlage 6 (GMDS, H 3/738).**
RO *(Razvedyvatelnyi Otdel)* = Intelligence Service of the Red Army
OO (*Osobyi Otdel)* = Intelligence Service of the NKVD

Although the German documents reveal no clear-cut division of labor in Soviet Intelligence operations behind the German lines, it appears that in the cities and larger towns the Soviets relied primarily on agents whom the Red Army and NKVD had left behind, had recruited directly, or had brought in by various means. In the countryside, on the other hand, the partisans' role in intelligence work increased in importance as the war went on, even though for special missions Soviet Intelligence continued to send regular agents into the rural areas behind the front. Some of them operated independently; others had orders to join the partisans or to fall back on them for various kinds of support. The activities of these agents and of the partisans frequently overlapped and their identities became blurred. The Soviet Intelligence network in the German rear was highly complicated, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the Germans were never fully able to understand its organization or defeat its operations.

§II. Intelligence Assignments of the Partisans

In this section the intelligence activities of the partisans will be discussed in terms of specific assignments and results. As indicated in the previous section, the partisans procured intelligence information not only for their own purposes but also for the Red Army and the NKVD. Scattered evidence of this appears in some German reports as early as 1941, but it was not until 1943 that the Germans realized the full scope of partisan intelligence activities. In September 1943, *Fremde Heere Ost* put it as follows: "As far as intelligence work is concerned, the partisan brigades and detachments have the task of conducting military espionage for the Red Army as well as extensive intelligence activities for the agencies in charge of political and economic affairs. . . ."

[*Nachrichten Nr. 4,* 10 September 1943, p. 5.]

Probably the most concise and specific statement on the partisan intelligence mission is contained in a Soviet directive entitled "Manual for the Partisan Intelligence Scout," which the Germans captured late in 1942. It sets three basic tasks for partisan intelligence activities in the rear of the enemy: (1) intelligence for the Red Army; (2) intelligence for the political agencies of the oblast; and (3) intelligence pertaining to the security and operations of the bands.

[PzAOK 2, Ic/AO, "Feindnachrichten Nr. 1/43, Anlage 11: 'Merkblatt des Kundschafters der Partisanen,'" 31 January 1943, p. 1 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 37075/ 159).]

A fourth point, political intelligence, which was later added to this list in a report by *Fremde Heere Ost,* seems to be largely identical with the second point.

[*Nachrichten Nr. 1,* 3 May 1943, p. 3.]

The "political" agencies of the oblast presumably included both Government and Party organs as well as the NKVD which had either been evacuated or were functioning illegally in the area under German occupation.

In terms of U.S. intelligence concepts, the first and third tasks constitute "tactical" missions; that is data which have an immediate bearing on the conduct of operations in the field: the collection of information on enemy order of battle, location of troops and installations, battle plans, morale, etc. The second and fourth tasks might be called "strategic" missions in the sense that information on the political and economic conditions of the occupied territories, the organization of the German administration, and the reaction of the local population to the occupation was essential to the Soviet Government in assessing the long-range capabilities of the Germans. It is doubtful whether a distinction between the "tactical" and the "strategic" mission would serve as a useful frame of reference since the intelligence activities of the partisans cannot always be fitted into such categories. When, for example, the partisans penetrated the *Ordnungsdienst* (OD), which was used by the Germans both as an indigenous police force and as an auxiliary in antipartisan warfare, their objectives may have been both to provide the Soviet authorities with information on the workings of that organization and to protect their own security by placing informants in the OD who would warn the bands about any moves against them.

A. PARTISAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES FOR THE RED ARMY

It is difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy when cooperation between the partisans and the Red Army in intelligence matters began. There can be no doubt that the Red Army and the sections of the NKVD concerned with military intelligence did everything possible to obtain information on German troop dispositions and movements, operational plans, location of headquarters, staffs, airfields, and a host of other data important to the conduct of operations.

While Soviet Intelligence presumably began, soon after the outbreak of war, to draw on the partisans as sources of needed information, specific intelligence assignments appear only rarely in German reports for 1941 and even 1942. First mention of such assignments was found in a report of V Corps of September 1941 which mentioned that the mission of the partisans included: "Collecting information concerning airfields, supply installations, and headquarters."

[V. A.K., Ic, "Erfahrungen in der Partisanenbekaempfung," 2 September 1941 (GMDS, V AK 17647/22).]

Captured reports of a partisan unit operating in the Smolensk area indicated that this unit had systematically performed intelligence work for the Red Army between May and September 1942.

[XXIII. A.K., Ic, "Tätigkeitsbericht, Anlage 25, 'Meldung Anlage 3,'" 5 June 1942, p. 2 (GMDS, XXIII AK 76156).]

What kind of information the Red Army requested from the partisans in 1941 is also evident from the summary report of the Provost Marshal General for January 1942 which has been cited above in another context: "With all available means and forces at our disposal, information must be gathered concerning the enemy: his activities, continuity and location of his front-line positions, tanks, artillery, air force, other troop units, and location of headquarters staffs. This intelligence must be forwarded to the front units of the Red Army."

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt.K.Verw., "Erfahrungen ueber Aufbau, Aufgaben, Auftreten und Bekaempfung der Partisanenabteilungen," 15 January 1942, p. 19 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.717)]

A much more detailed and specific list of intelligence assignments is contained in the "Manual for the Partisan Intelligence Scout." In addition to the usual targets—troops, installations, communications—partisan agents were also instructed to look for evidence of German preparations for chemical warfare and to procure, if possible, German documents of all kinds, particularly samples of identity papers. The list of assignments follows:

I. Collecting Information on the Enemy for the Red Army Recognize the enemy by the braids on his uniform:

White braid—infantry; red braid—artillery; green braid—mountain troops; cherry-red braid—chemical warfare troops; pink braid—armored troops; golden-yellow braid—cavalry; blue braid—medical troops; black braid—engineers; lemon-colored braid—signal troops; blue braid with airplane—air force.

Take note of the traffic; count the tanks, light tanks, armored cars, trucks, passenger cars, motorcycles, bicycles, guns, vehicles, horseback riders, trailers, etc. Distinguish between open trucks, which appear more seldom, and those with roofs. The 7-ton truck carries 32 men; the 5-ton truck, 18 men plus arms and ammunition. Observe if the enemy soldiers carry a field-grey round container; it holds the gas mask.

In case of troops marching through, distinguish whether they are Germans or Hungarians, Slovaks, Italians, Rumanians, and others. Note how many there are.

Remember the markings and figures on the technical equipment of the enemy. [Tactical markings of German divisions follow. Notes A and B contain explanations of these tactical markings.]

Note C

Remember the enemy is preparing for chemical warfare against us; distinguish between tank cars and other cars moving on the railroads; observe carefully the unloading of chemical warfare materials from the cars, motor vans, etc. Note the markings on the means of transportation. A yellow elephant signifies the presence of poison gas, which is packed either in glass ampules which resemble aerial bombs or in balloons, kegs, etc.

1. Tear gas—marked by white bands or rings.

2. Vomiting gases—marked by blue bands or rings. [The German term is *aetzend* meaning "etching," but from the context it is obvious that vomiting gases such as Adamsite are meant.]

3. Choking gases—marked by green bands or rings.

4. Blister gases—marked by yellow bands or rings.

Attempt to obtain samples of the enemy's chemical warfare materials (chemical bombs, shells, mines, bullets, gas masks, antigas paulins [protective covers], etc.).

Supplementary information about the enemy can be obtained from a large number of sources of a nonmilitary nature:

[Probably should read "nontactical."]

1. Orders of the Day, decrees of the enemy, staff correspondence.

2. Envelopes, letters, covering letters with APO numbers.

3. Paybooks, identification disks.

4. Registration papers for heavy and light tanks, automobiles, motorcycles, etc.

Note D

Take necessary measures to note all data and make sketches, where necessary, to mark the presence of enemy bunkers, trenches and tank traps, minefields, wire entanglements, antiaircraft guns (also their number); sketch troop billets in relation to buildings and streets (how long billeted there); approach routes; locations of kitchens, rations, and supply points; repair facilities, garages for automobiles and tanks; gasoline tanks (periods of gasoline issue); horse stables and places where horses are kept at night.

Also note the location of staff sections, giving number and street as well as such data as how far these headquarters are located from the church, fire brigade tower, billets, railroad line, factory chimneys, from rivers, brooks, through highways, roads. . . . Note also the armament of troops resting in garrison. *Note E*

Every day the following information must be obtained regarding rail traffic: the number of military trains passing through and in what direction; how many troops carried; how many wounded; how many officers; the number of light and heavy tanks, armored cars, guns, vehicles, cavalry, gasoline cars, large crates, etc.; places of loading and unloading; locations of depots.

Traffic on through highways *(Rollbahnen)* and roads must be observed. It must be ascertained where the enemy erects temporary landing strips, airfields, and where he conceals his planes at night; also the number of planes and their types (bombers, fighters, transport planes).

It is urgently requested that upon the completion of intelligence missions documents and charts pertaining to the enemy's location be submitted and such other materials as may contribute to the annihilation of the enemy.

[*Nachrichten Nr. 1,* 3 May 1943, Anlage 7. This is the same "Merkblatt des Kundschafters der Partisanen" cited at the beginning of this section. Citation from the *Nachrichten* is made because of their more convenient form]

An interesting illustration of the type of information to be collected by the partisans is given in a list of intelligence assignments which a partisan otryad [A Soviet term used most frequently to designate an independent partisan unit] was to cover during the period of one month. The targets included strength, composition, and location of German troops; security plans and measures; work routine of German garrisons; names of native policemen and other collaborators; location of staff sections, airfields; and railroad installations and their protection.

[*Nachrichten Nr. 9,* 11 June 1944, p. 10]

The following is an example of an early intelligence report by partisans to the Red Army. Dated September 1941, it came from a partisan unit operating south of Leningrad and was addressed to Marshal Voroshilov, commander of the Northwest Front.

Intelligence Report from the far rear territory of the enemy
Map 1:100,000 area south of the village of Lyady
3 September 1941

In the area defined by the Peschenka Sanitarium Gryasno-Domishche-Batovo, the enemy is establishing a defense position. In the village of Domishche (in the school) the staff of a larger unit has been located; it is protected by a reinforced unit equipped with heavy tanks and trucks. West of Domishche the enemy is concentrating heavy tanks and heavy artillery. In the area of Petkinaya Gora, coordinates 62, 64-80, the enemy is moving heavy artillery into position; a few planes are at the airport of Domishche; the airport is protected by antiaircraft guns. Position near Hill 184. The enemy patrols the Domishche- Lyady area daily with tanks and tank reconnaissance cars. Along the Volosovo-Gryasno road the enemy is bringing up new reserves consisting of heavy tanks, armored reconnaissance cars, and antitank guns with tractors. The vehicles are located in the cemetery of Domishche and the area mentioned above; they are well camouflaged.

Evaluation

The enemy is employing an armored division as a reserve in this area, whose task it is to strike a blow at our troops fighting in the area of Siverskaya-Vyritsa. I am asking you to order the dropping of parachutists in the area of the Budanov swamps, coordinates 58, 68, from where we shall lead them directly to the enemy. This drop area cannot be observed by the enemy. Marking:

3 campfires in one line. We expect the dropping between the 7th and 11th. I request further directives.

Commander of the Unit
5 September 1941
[signed] Kopytov

[8. Pz.Div., Ic, "Taetigkeitsbericht vom 23.8.41—31.12.1942," 3-5 September 1941 (GMDS, 8 PzD 24131/2, Anlage 41).]

Samples of intelligence procured by the partisans which would be of value both to the Red Army and the bands may be found in the following excerpts from reports of the so-called Stalin Brigade, a partisan unit which, under the command of a Lt. Col. Okhotin, operated in the Polotsk-Nevel area in the northern border region of Belorussia.

Results of Reconnaissance and Intelligence
4 September 1943

1. Village of Rybankovo. On 20 August, occupation force relieved by 100 Cossacks. Not determined how these are armed.

. . . . . .

4. Occupation forces at Stayki, Dukhino unchanged. Between the villages of Borovkov, Zavolchikha, Tropki, along the paths used by the partisans are German mines. Ambushes were laid along the roads. [A long list of names follows.] Approaches to the communities of Taporsky and Stayki are also mined. . . . Source: agent reports of the 2d Battalion and the scouting group.

7. From 27 August on, daily rail traffic of 5 transport trains from Polotsk in the direction of Bygosovo carrying civilians, cattle, and wounded coming from Bryansk, Gomel, Vitebsk, and Minsk.

8. Fifty per cent of the laborers working on the Polotsk-Bygosovo rail line have been shipped to Germany.

. . . . . .

11. Morale of German troops and police is poor.

12. Polotsk. The guard at the airport has been strengthened. Transport planes are landing. . . .

24 August 1943

Dretun: 1 battalion of 406th Regiment for guarding railroad. Airport has up to 40 bombing planes stationed there.

Baravukha I: Staging area, up to 5,000 Germans. Youth in training. Armament: 3 AA guns, very heavy machine guns, 3 field pieces, number of machine guns and mortars not determined.

Beloye: Police school. 100 men, about 15 of them Germans, 76mm gun, 2 antitank guns, 2 80mm mortars, number of machine guns not determined.

All above-listed posts are fortified with dugouts, trenches, wire entanglements. Approaches are mined.

Altogether there are in the surrounding communities 6,367 Germans, 182 policemen, 139 Vlasovites. Armament: 4 76mm guns, 9 antitank guns, 3 AA guns, 11 8cm mortars, 26 5cm mortars, 26 heavy MG's, 40 light MG's, 49 submachine guns.

On 12 August the daily bombing and burning of villages in Rossono Rayon started. An average of up to 10 planes of the JU-88 type participated, taking off from airports at Polotsk-Dretun. At Polotsk, Idritsa, and other places occupied by the Germans, young people born in 1925 and 1926 are being called up for shipment to Germany.

The Chief of the Intelligence Section
Capt. Kozlovsky

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Nr. 5394/42," 19 September 1943, p. 5 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 40252/7, Anlage 33). Another sample of a tactical partisan intelligence report contains information on the location of German airfields and aircraft stationed in the Bryansk area.]

The most detailed examples of partisan intelligence reports are contained in the German account of the history and record of the Grishin Regiment, a unit that operated over a wide area of Army Group Center from December 1941 until 1944. The Germans were impressed with the range and caliber of information collected by the intelligence staff of this unit and forwarded to Moscow:

The S-2 reports of the battalions were collected and evaluated by the regimental staff and then forwarded to Moscow. The monthly intelligence reports to Popov, the chief of the partisan staff with the Western Front, are conspicuous for their wealth of details. Troop movements, strength of garrisons in towns and villages, staffs, security of bridges, ammunition, and ration dumps, freight traffic, harvesting, shipments of grain, recruitment and shipment of workers to Germany are reported in greatest detail. . . .

[*Nachrichten Nr. 7,* 8 December 1943, p. 4.]

Samples of these intelligence reports follow:

1. 5th Battalion, 20 September 1943

In Smolensk Oblast on the major supply route of Smolensk-Krasnoye, Smolensk-Gusino, German troops were observed retreating in the direction of Orsha. In the areas of Pochinkovo, Dukhovchina, and Yartsevo refugees consisting primarily of policemen, starostas [Village elders], and mayors are arriving daily. Smolensk is being evacuated. The editorial staff of the German newspaper, *Novyi Put* [New Way] has been transferred to Belostok. Harvesting and transporting of grain are being accelerated. The staff of a German army was transferred from Smolensk to Tolochin between Minsk and Orsha. Field fortifications along the Dnepr and the Sozh are being speeded up; pillboxes and trenches are under construction.

Roslavl has been evacuated; [there is] uninterrupted traffic of motor vehicles on the Roslavl-Mstislavl highway. The Germans are taking everything with them, even such trivial things as furniture or potted flowers. A large fuel dump is located in a small grove on the Mogilev 2-Shklov rail line, about 200 meters from Mogilev 2. Our air raid seriously damaged the airport in Shatalovo; 45 airplanes and all supply dumps in the vicinity have been burned out.

2. 2d Battalion, 5 September 1943 A course in espionage for boys and girls was concluded on 4 August according to natives of Mogilev.

3. Intelligence report from Mogilev, 7 September [1943] On 25 August, 500 infantry troops occupied the camp next to the airport. The concentration camp adjoining the Dmitrov Factory contains about 500 people including 276 Jews. A small troop training area which can accommodate about 1,500 men is located behind the automobile repair shop [and there is another area] in Chapayev for about 1,000 men. The guard regiment of the "people's" army ["Volksarmee," probably refers to indigenous units] is billeted on the grounds of the artillery regiment near the Mogilev 2 railroad station. The regiment fights against the partisans. The regiment is commanded by Colonel Kononov. A pigeon station containing about 500 pigeons is located on the road to Vydritsa [?]. A vegetable storage place has been set up near the railroad station adjoining the overpass. Locomotives are being repaired in the automobile repair shop. The meat combine is functioning; the sausage department is located in the former newspaper building. Airplane parts are being manufactured in the pipe foundry. There are about 1,000 troops in Mogilev excluding those in the training areas. There are no armored units. Antiaircraft batteries are stationed on the bridges. At the present time there are about 500 motor vehicles in Mogilev.

4. 5th Battalion, 8 September 1943 Changes and transfer involving the German 4th and 9th Armies are being executed at this time. Rumors say that the greatly weakened 9th Army is being strengthened by reserves and by parts of the 4th Army. This includes Staff 675 of the 4th Army with the following officers: Major Kuehn, Captain Alzt (illegible), and 1st Lt. Broer; this staff is being transferred to the 9th Army and will remain in Krichev where the staff of the 9th Army will also be moved. The staff of the 4th Army with its commanding general, Heinrici, is still located in Shumakhi (illegible), south of Roslavl. It is strongly protected by antiaircraft batteries. A shift of the 4th Army to the Ukraine or to Italy is expected momentarily. The 9th Army will then take over the present sector of the 4th Army. Army supply commander is situated in Klimovichi, southeast of Krichev, together with Colonel Zipperman von (remainder of name illegible). Antiaircraft batteries are almost completely lacking.

A large airport serving as a base for long-range aircraft and containing a fuel supply depot is located in the village of Shumkovka near the highway. A motor pool ... is situated in the village of Selets on the Krichev-Roslavl highway. Cars are parked along both sides of the highway under the trees throughout the entire village. There are no antiaircraft batteries. A large depot for winter supplies (skis, sleds, and clothing) is located near the Krichev 2 railroad station. . . .

[*Ibid.,* p. 10. The information given by the 5th Battalion on 8 September 1943 regarding changes in assignments and locations of the German Fourth and Ninth Armies is in complete disagreement with the situation pictured on German tactical maps of the period. For example, the Situation East *(Lage Ost)* map of OKH for 8 September 1943 indicates that Headquarters of Fourth Army was north, not south of Roslavl. Ninth Army Headquarters was not in Krichev but about 100 miles to the southeast; Fourth Army was never scheduled to go to Italy or the Ukraine but remained in Army Group Center throughout the war. What apparently confused the partisans in this instance was the fact that Second Panzer Army headquarters, minus its units, had indeed left the area in August 1943 for Yugoslavia and that its sector had been taken over by Ninth and Second Armies, necessitating considerable regrouping of German forces]

The Soviets, however, were apparently not satisfied with the reports of the Grishin Regiment and in particular criticized the quality of the tactical intelligence procured. This is what the German report, which was based on captured records of the band, has to say:

[The caliber of] tactical intelligence is being repeatedly criticized in the orders [coming down from Moscow]. For example, Major Lazarev is being reproached for not being able to recognize and report in time the enemy's encirclement plans. In a report of December 1942, four women scouts who had not carried out their missions are named; another report dated January 1943 names a woman scout who had been sentenced to death for repeated nonexecution of missions and other violations.

[*Ibid.,* p. 4. Another example of willful false reporting by partisan agents is to be found in a report of a German antipartisan task force in the Bryansk area which, during a big operation against the bands, captured a partisan intelligence dispatch. The agent who reported sighting only two trains at a railroad station in the area was actually shot in the middle of a forest, in a hide-out from which he could not possibly have seen the trains. (Gruppe Jolasse, "Gefechtsbericht ueber Unternehmen Dreieck und Viereck vom 17.9.—2.10.1942," 19 October 1942, p. 3, GMDS, Korueck 27894/3.)]

The Grishin Regiment was badly mauled by the Germans near Mogilev in October 1943 but continued its activities into 1944. A report of *Fremde Heere Ost* of February 1944 stated that the band was assigned to reconnaissance tasks for the Red Army in the area of Army Group Center: "According to reliable sources, the 13th Regiment (Grishin), location: SW of Belynichi, received orders to conduct intelligence work for the Red Army regardless of the difficult situation. .. "

[OKH/GenStdH/FHO (I), "Anlagen zum Lagebericht Ost (Feindlage-Banden) Nr. 327," 5 February 1944 (GMDS, H 3/227).]

Other specific examples of extensive and apparently reliable partisan intelligence work done for the Red Army have been found in records pertaining to the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area. Partisan records captured by the Germans and interrogations of prisoners revealed that the information forwarded by the bands was quite accurate.

As far as later developments are concerned, the materials at present available provide only a few hints. It appears that tactical intelligence work by the partisans for the Red Army assumed increasing significance and became an ever more important aspect of partisan warfare, particularly since the operations of the bands were being synchronized with those of the Red Army.

B. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE

In addition to military intelligence, either for themselves or the Red Army, the partisans also gathered and forwarded to Moscow information on the political, economic, and social conditions of the German-occupied territories. Specifically, the Soviet Government was interested in the following points: how the German occupation was organized, how it functioned, to what extent it had consolidated its position, reactions of the population to it, what social and economic effects the occupation had produced, and similar matters.

In the winter of 1941-42, Soviet Intelligence apparently made a large-scale effort to procure information of this type, using masses of agents, including highly trained Party members and politruks as well as women and children. According to an intelligence report of Eleventh Army, dated March 1942, their specific missions included the following: (1) What factories have been restored and are again in operation? (2) Are there Russian deserters, and, if so, where? (3) Which inhabitants have not obeyed the evacuation order? (4) Names of mayors. (5) Names of auxiliary policemen.

[AOK 11, AO, "Abwehrnachrichten Nr. 4," 14 March 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, AOK 11, 35774/10).]

Although the partisans were not included in the enumeration of agents contained in the report, the fact that they too were utilized in this connection may be deduced from the statement with which the Eleventh Army report begins: "Activities of Soviet Intelligence and the partisans often overlap to a considerable extent... ."

[Ibid]

While the reports of the field commanders do not contain specific references to political or economic targets, a very detailed listing of intelligence assignments in these fields is attached to the *Bulletin on Partisan Warfare No. 4.* This list was prepared by *Fremde Heere Ost* on the basis of captured Soviet documents. Purporting to constitute the operational intelligence directive of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement, it contains 172 questions, grouped into 21 fields, and may be taken as a good indicator of the efforts and care with which the Soviets were trying to obtain a picture of the situation in the occupied territories. A few of the most interesting questions in the political, administrative, economic, social, and cultural spheres should be noted:

Organizational structure of the local administration.
Heads of the most important organs of the local administration.
Enterprises in operation (factories, plants, individual workshops).
Condition of public utilities.
Condition of the workers: regulation of work, working hours, wage questions, standard of living.
Forms of utilizing the land and methods of farming.
What is being taxed?
Methods of tax collection.
What kinds of goods and foodstuffs are supplied to the population?
Do grade and high schools exist in towns and in the rayon?
Medical care for the population.
What newspapers are published and what is their circulation?
Relationship of the Germans to the different religious currents. To what currents is preference being given?
How is the nationality question being solved by the Fascists in the occupied territories?
Attitude of the urban population toward the administrative measures of the occupiers (workers, "white-collar" employees, intelligentsia, and especially the specialists in science, technology, and art).
Of what elements is the police composed?

[*Nachrichten Nr. 4,* 10 September 1943, pp. 7-10; cf. *Nachrichten Nr. 1,* "Merkblatt fuer politische Erkundung," 3 May 1943, Anlage 8 (GMDS, H 3/738), which is given in full in Appendix, Document 13.]

Related to these were other questions designed to elicit the most detailed information on all aspects of the German occupation.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing examples show that the intelligence mission of the partisans comprised very diversified tasks, ranging from simple reconnaissance to complicated assignments of a political nature. Unfortunately, the documents do not reveal what priorities were given to the various assignments, nor do they permit of easy deductions on this point. Nevertheless, it seems safe to assume that the intelligence and security requirements of the bands themselves had to be

satisfied first, particularly during the early period of the war. Second priority probably went to the procurement of intelligence useful in Soviet military operations, while political and economic intelligence presumably occupied third place. Obviously, much depended on the current military situation and on local conditions. Thus, it seems entirely possible that under the appropriate circumstances every effort of the partisans was bent toward obtaining information for the Red Army, while at other times their intelligence work focused on political questions, especially when such information was important to Soviet psychological warfare. A closer analysis of the basis on which intelligence assignments were given to the partisans and the priorities placed upon them will be possible, if it can be done at all, only after more detailed information has been assembled on specific areas and periods.

§III. Intelligence Operations of the Partisans

To carry out the various assignments outlined in the preceding section, the partisans gradually built up an elaborate intelligence and security system. This system may be compared to a series of concentric circles. First and innermost were the guards and outposts who protected the band's hide-outs and camps.

Security measures depend on the size and strength of the detachment. They always aim at surrounding the entire encampment and are instituted on the basis of observation. The task of the detachment is to evade contact with the enemy and remain undetected. Under all circumstances, observation posts must be set up along the roads and paths on which the detachment moves towards its rest camp. This is necessary because the detachment may be pursued by enemy troops which have detected it. If the detachment should be detected, the guards must warn it by prearranged signals. The detachment selects special guards for this task. The guards may use flares, but fire only in exceptional cases, and only when they are satisfied that the detachment covered by them can safely get away without a battle.

[Komm.d.Sich.Tr. Sued, Ia, "Die Partisanenabteilungen und ihre Taktik " n.d. (GMDS, HGeb 39502/19)]

Then, there were the *Kundschafter,* or scouts, who were either members of the bands themselves or closely affiliated with them. They served, as one Soviet directive put it, as "the eyes and ears" of the commander of the band and collected most of the information.

[PzAOK 2, Ic/AO, "Feindnachrichten Nr. 1/43, Anlage 11: 'Merkblatt des Kundschafters der Partisanen,'" 31 January 1943, p. 1 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 37075/159).]

From the missions of the *Kundschafter,* described in detail in the previous section, it is evident that they constituted the real core of the partisan intelligence network.

Finally, the bands were screened by an outer ring of informants in cities, towns, and villages. For the most part these informants were not full-time agents and often did not know the whereabouts of the bands. They kept in contact with the partisans through liaison agents or "cut-outs" to warn the bands of German plans and moves.

It is desirable that each group have informants in the communities occupied by the enemy. Through these, essential information about the enemy and his objectives must be procured and, upon occasion, supplies replenished. For this purpose [to act as informants] people must be selected who appear least suspicious to the enemy (old men, women, adolescents, etc.), so that they are available during combat periods. Care must be taken in contacting these informants, so that they obtain no knowledge whatever about the whereabouts of the detachment.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt.K.-Verw., "Erfahrungen ueber Aufbau, Aufgaben, Auftreten und Bekaempfung der Partisanenabteilungen," 15 January 1942, p. 17 (GMDS, Wi/ID 2.717).]

The nature of the partisan informant net is indicated by the statement of a partisan who was captured by an SS unit early in 1943:

The local partisans are brought together in intelligence detachments and are sent to visit their relatives in the vicinity in order to gather information. These relatives and friends of the partisans compose the real informant net of the bands. Banding local partisans together in a secret intelligence unit safeguards the security of the informant network. . .

[SS Kav.Div., Ic, "Vernehmungsniederschrift aufgenommen durch Sicherheitspolizei u. SD, SK 7a, Erkundungstrupp Nakaten," 18 January 1943, p. 3 (GMDS, XLI AK 29021).]

Village residents who worked in towns were also used as informants:

In many cases the existence of an informant net in villages close to the partisan base could be observed. In another case, it could be ascertained that spying was done both by people who resided in the locality and by those who worked in small towns and returned to their native villages on Sundays. There they delivered their information to the bands, were interrogated more closely, and were given new assignments. This system is extremely effective and involves no risk for the enemy.

[*Nachrichten Nr. 1,* 3 May 1943, p. 4.]

The persons recruited for the partisan intelligence net were solemnly inducted by the following oath:

Pledge of Partisan Intelligence Informants

I.....pledge to the Intelligence Section:

1. To report all persons and groups who engage in espionage against the Red Army and the partisan movement.

2. To report all observations of the enemy and his equipment.

3. To discharge honestly and promptly all missions given me by the officer in charge of the intelligence section.

4. Never to talk to anyone about my connections with the intelligence section.

5. To sign all reports made by me under the cover name of ... in order to maintain complete security of information.

If I do not discharge the missions entrusted to me, I shall be shot.

[*Nachrichten Nr.* 9, 11 June 1944, Anlage 9.]

The German documents do not contain specific and explicit information concerning the basis on which agents were selected for partisan intelligence work. It may be assumed, however, that at

least two criteria were applied: (1) The agent had to have a good knowledge of local conditions. (2) He had to have a good cover; that is to say, he had to be in a position to get around easily and as inconspicuously as possible. It was for this latter reason that the partisans relied heavily on women, children, and older people, as indicated in the quotation from the Provost Marshal General's report cited above. A number of other reports corroborate this point. In March 1942, rear area command of Fourth Army said: "They [the partisans] also possess an excellent intelligence service for which they prefer to use women and children in order to avoid suspicion."

[Korueck 559, le, "Erfahrungsbericht ueber die Partisanenbekaempfung im rueckw. Armeegebiet," March 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, Korueck 29236/3)]

A report of the 339th Security Division from the same period stated. "Small children and very old men who seem to be completely harmless persons are the best scouts. In this way they [the partisans] are always informed about impending operations and can best evade them."

[339. Inf.Div., Ic, "Nr. 138/42 geh.," 14 February 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, Korueck 19030/3, Anlage 22).]

The 221st Security Division was informed by some partisan deserters that in one case a 14-year-old boy had thoroughly reconnoitered the situation for a band of partisans which was planning a raid on a German construction unit.

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Vernehmung von 2 Ueberlaeufern aus Kamenka," 15 April 1942 (GMDS, 221 ID 22639/6, Anlage 18)]

Praising the intelligence service of the partisans, the rear area command of Second Panzer Army reported the following concerning the categories of people employed as agents: "Their sources of information are scouts, the population which frequently sympathizes with the bands, men, women, children, or spies clothed in German army or railway uniforms. . . ."

[Korueck 532, Qu/Ia, "Richtlinien fuer die Bekaempfung der Partisanen durch die im Sicherungsdienst an Eisenbahnen und Strassen eingesetzten Truppen," 23 May 1942 (GMDS, Korueck 29239/3).]

A partisan who was captured by the 83d Infantry Division in May 1942 said that his unit employed twenty women as agents.

[83. Inf.Div., Ic, "Feindnachrichtenblatt Nr. 17," 25 May 1942 (GMDS, 83 ID 24230/5).]

Even cripples and other physically handicapped people were being used: "In view of the credulity of German soldiers, the Soviet partisans frequently use cripples, primarily as agents. Some cases are also known in which healthy persons camouflaged themselves by putting on bandages or inflicting loathsome wounds upon themselves."

[AOK 11, AO, "Abwehrnachrichten Nr. 4," 14 March 1942, p. 4 (GMDS, **AOK** 11, 35774/10).]

A similar statement was contained in the summary report of the Provost Marshal General on the partisan situation from July 1942 to March 1943: "To an increasing degree the enemy is employing cripples, especially amputees, as agents because he figures that such persons arouse less suspicion and will not be challenged during checks. . . ."

[HFPCh im OKH/Gen.z.b.V./H.Wes.Abt./GFP, "Allgemeiner Ueberblick ueber die Bandenbewegung fuer die Zeit vom 1.7.1942—31.3.1943," 10 April 1943, p. 6 (GMDS, OKW/734).]

The question to what extent the partisans were actively being helped by the population in their intelligence operations is, however, not an easy one to answer. The German reports, some of which have been cited above, suggest that this help was considerable and widespread. Even in 1942 the Provost Marshal General said that, in spite of the threat of death penalties against those aiding the partisans, some persons were still willing to risk such support in different ways.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/GFP, "Entwicklung der Partisanenbewegung in der Veit vom 1.1—30.6.1942," 31 July 1942, p. 23 (GMDS, H.Gr. Nord 75131/ 113)]

On the other hand, most of the German reports for 1941 and 1942 describe the people in the occupied territories as being basically friendly to the Germans and even willing to aid them in their fight against the partisans. For example, some were willing to become informants for German intelligence units. Under the impact of later developments, which lie beyond the purview of this chapter, popular attitudes changed, but even then, sullen indifference seems to have been more common than open hostility toward the Germans. Under these circumstances and in view of the fact that intelligence work for the partisans involved great personal risks, it may be assumed that only the most active and loyal adherents of the Soviet regime volunteered for such activity, while others did so only to provide themselves with some kind of insurance against the day when the Soviets would return. From the rest of the population, the partisans could expect only passive neutrality or, at most, warnings of impending danger. A captured Soviet document, dated September 1941 and containing instructions to Soviet agents and a description of conditions likely to be encountered by them, said:

There are, however, many elements among the population who sympathize with the partisan movement and the Soviet regime. But, since they fear the consequences, they are using utmost caution in their activities. Thus, it has happened that our agents have received signals to leave a village because the Germans were in it; they were given food . . . and were advised to get out, or be captured by the Germans. . . .

[AOK 4, Ic, "Anlage 3 zu Feindnachrichtenblatt 18: 'Grundsaetzliche Anweisung fuer den geheimen Nachrichtendienst der Geheimen Nachrichten-Abt. des Stabes der 21. Armee vom 1.9.1941,'" n.d., p. 1 (GMDS, AOK 4, 13767/5).]

This description of the people's loyalty to the Soviet regime seems to have been more optimistic than the facts warranted. Nevertheless, the fact remains that partisans could count on passive, and sometimes even active, support of the people, as is borne out by the following report from the Bryansk area:

The population, under intimidation by the partisans, betrays nothing and nobody. Most of the time, it is possible to obtain information only by constant persuasion and by the assurance that we want to help. In principle, the sympathy of the people, particularly of the women, girls, and children living in villages seldom visited by Germans, lies with the partisans who even offer rewards for especially good intelligence information. .. .

[339. Inf.Div., Ic, "Nr. 138/42 geh.," 14 February 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, Korueck 19030/3, Anlage 22)]

This situation created a problem with which the Germans attempted to deal in several ways. The author of the report just quoted, the intelligence officer of a German security division, recommended shooting all persons encountered outside their place of residence.

[*Ibid.]*

A less drastic, but widely used method was the restriction of the movements of the civilian population, particularly at night and in areas close to the front. An OKH directive of October 1941 ordered strict control of civilian road traffic.

[ObdH/GenStdH/Aus.Abt.(Ia), "Richtlinien fuer Partisanenbekaempfung," 25 October 1941, p. 7 (GMDS, EAP 38-x/14).]

Even before that, in September 1941, Ninth Army had put into effect a curfew and had set up restricted zones: "(a) Inhabitants are forbidden to leave their communities during the hours of darkness (i.e., from one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise), (b) Along the railroad lines inhabitants are forbidden to enter a strip one kilometer wide on both sides of the embankment, except to tend their fields or to cross the area by public roads."

[AOK 9, Ic/AO/O.Qu., "Partisanenbekaempfung," 2 September 1941, p. 2 (GMDS, AOK 9, 14162/7)]

Many other German orders also stressed the threat to security arising from the fact that civilians moved about rather freely, and urged commanders to put an end to this traffic. One of the strictest orders was issued by the rear area command of Fourth Army in October 1941: "Throughout the entire army rear area freedom of movement has been canceled. During the day all persons of military age (17 to 65), who are wandering back and forth between communities, are to be picked up and sent to a prison camp. At night, any civilian on the highways and in open country will be fired on.. . ."

[Korueck 559, Qu. to 137. Inf.Div., "Tagebuch Nr. 4090," 8 October 1941 (GMDS, Korueck 13512/2, Anlage 25).]

The security situation was aggravated when the German losses mounted in the winter of 1941 and many sectors of the front were thinly held, with large gaps in the line. This made infiltration and line-crossing possible on a large scale, as the rear area command of Fourth Army pointed out in February 1942:

[The Russian people] see what is happening on our side, and what they do not see or experience directly, they hear through their excellent intelligence service. Since we have no continuous forward line, traffic of every kind from the Soviet side and back again is possible, and extensive use is being made of such crossings. New partisan bands have infiltrated, Russian parachutists are being dropped and are taking over leadership. . .

[Korueck 559, Qu., "Lage im rueckwaertigen Armeegebiet," 1 February 1942 (GMDS, Korueck 29236/2, Anlage 75)]

Weak spots in the German front, especially the boundaries between corps or divisions, were exploited by the Soviets not only for infiltrating agents, but also as points to be attacked in attempted breakthroughs. Information about these soft spots was obtained from local elements, according to a report of Second Panzer Army:

It has become known that the Russians are making extensive use of information obtained from the local inhabitants. Repeatedly, it has been observed that the enemy is accurately informed about the soft spots in our front and frequently picks the boundaries between our corps and divisions as points of attack. The movement of the inhabitants between the fronts must, therefore, be prevented by all possible means.

[PzAOK 2, Ic/AO, "Feindnachrichten Nr. 1/42," 2 January 1942, p. 3 (GMDS, PzAOK 2, 37075/170).]

Apparently, the interdiction of free movement of civilians proved effective in checking Soviet intelligence activities conducted either by regular agents or partisans. In October 1942, Third Panzer Army stated: "The prohibition of civilian movements proved to be a very effective means for curbing hostile bands and enemy agents."

[PzAOK 3, Ic/AO, "Abwehrschutzmassnahmen gegenueber der Zivilbevoelkerung," 14 October 1942 (GMDS, PzAOK 3, 25784/43).]

Besides restricting civilian traffic and setting curfew hours, the Germans also instituted a strict registration of the residents of all localities in order to check on transients among whom there might be partisans and Soviet agents. Summing up the effects of civilian traffic upon the security situation and the German measures to control it, the Provost Marshal General said the following in the middle of 1942:

The appointment of reliable mayors and indigenous policemen in communities recently cleared of partisans has proved to be an effective device for preventing the formation of new bands in such communities and in the adjacent woods. The mayors and police, in conjunction with German troops in the vicinity and with secret field police and military police detachments, watch closely over the pacified area, paying particular attention to the registering and screening of all persons newly arrived in the area.

To combat the dangers arising from the migration of the population the secret field police is constantly conducting large-scale checks. These revealed that among the migrating crowds, which are composed of evacuees, returnees, and food hoarders, numerous partisans and enemy agents can be found.

Satisfactory results have been achieved by checking pedestrians on the streets.

[HFPCh im OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/GFP, "Entwicklung der Partisanenbewegung in der Zeit vom 1.1.—30.6.1942," 31 July 1942, p. 39 (GMDS, H.Gr. Nord 75131/113).]

CHAPTER VI Airpower in Partisan Warfare

Gerhard L. Weinberg

Introduction

The use of airpower to organize, support, and direct a partisan movement was one of the major innovations of the war in the East. This combination of modern technology with a primitive form of warfare enabled the Soviet High Command to fashion a military and political weapon of tremendous strength from a guerrilla jnovement relegated by its very name to the "little war." It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the methods used and the success attained by air support, and, in order to complete the picture, to describe the German use of airpower in

antipartisan warfare. A discussion of the relation of airpower to partisan warfare cannot be lifted completely out of context without causing distortions and misunderstanding; its peculiarities and significance arise from two settings: air operations over the Eastern front, and partisan and antipartisan warfare behind the German lines. Some sketch of the first and frequent references to the second, at least in general terms, will be necessary to give meaning to the events examined here.

Although the German Air Force began the war on the USSR with a numerical inferiority in planes, it had better planes and a far more experienced and efficient organization. These two factors—superior equipment and wider experience—together with the surprise attack and the rapid capture of many airfields enabled the Luftwaffe to attain air superiority in the first months of the war. From October 1941 on, however, the German Air Force was increasingly hard pressed. Lack of adequate pilot and machine replacements, continuous overworking of fighter units, the growing length of communications lines, and Soviet numerical superiority combined to effect a change. Henceforth, the Germans could attain air superiority only on one front at a time by concentrating their forces for specific operations. German strategy in 1942 placed major emphasis on attacks toward Stalingrad and the Caucasus on the southern front, thus forcing the withdrawal of planes from the central front, behind which most of the partisan centers were located. By this time and increasingly so in the next two years, the mounting strength of the Red Air Force gave the Soviets secure dominance in the air over most of the Eastern front. While German Air Force units were repeatedly withdrawn from the Eastern front to cope with threats elsewhere (the Mediterranean theater, the Allied air offensive against Germany), the Red Air Force was strengthened by British and American planes. This combination of adverse circumstances could not be offset by German efforts to increase plane production, to make greater use of obsolescent planes, and to depend increasingly on the air forces of the Axis satellites.

Certain special factors affecting the air war in the East must also be considered. German insistence on holding areas surrounded or all but surrounded by the Red Army was a burden on the German Air Force, which was forced to commit large numbers of planes in an effort to supply such garrisons. The long front line and the relatively short Soviet air flights made German fighter interception more difficult and less frequent than on other fronts. In addition, the lack of an effective warning system made it possible for the Soviets to use planes obsolete by western standards.

[For published reports on the air war in the East, see Asher Lee, *The German Air Force* (New York: Harpers, 1946).]

All these factors obviously favored the Soviets and hindered the Germans. The superiority attained by Soviet Air Force operations in partisan warfare was therefore not surprising. The war in the East, however, was decided on the ground; and it was the ability of the Red Army to force the Germans into retreat which made it possible for the Red Air Force to make the contribution which is described here.

§I. The Role of Airpower in the Formation and Control of Partisan Units

In 1941 the Soviet government relied to a considerable extent on the organizers and officers flown into the partisan areas, though on a far smaller scale than later in the war. In this way failures in areas overrun by the enemy could be remedied, at least to some extent; efforts to recruit Red Army stragglers could be supported; and control over the small groups in existence could be established.

Another point not implicit in the situation in the occupied areas in 1941 is the impact airpower had on the general attitude of the population toward the Soviet regime. The appearance of "men from Moscow" no doubt served as a reminder that the long arm of the Soviet Government still reached into places abandoned by the Red Army. In a country in which partisan warfare was organized largely from the outside (unlike Yugoslavia, for example), airpower was essential to the formation of a partisan movement, not only because many of the leaders had to be brought in by air but also because the continuing power and presence of their old regime had to be brought home to a reluctant population. [For a discussion of the attitudes of the population in 1941, see Chap. IV.]

From time to time in subsequent years, it became necessary to reorganize the partisan movement locally for one reason or another. Thus, a group of partisan units in one area might have suffered heavy losses in a major antipartisan operation or the leadership of a group of bands might have been dispersed by a smaller but more surprising German blow. At other times, the performance of the partisan groups in a given area might not have been up to Soviet expectations. In such cases airpower provided one of the few means of reviving or reorganizing the partisans in these areas. In general, these situations followed either antipartisan operations or developments within the bands; they will be discussed in these two categories.

In the larger centers of partisan activity, the Germans periodically conducted major operations against the bands. In these operations, additional German forces were transferred to the area and were employed for a short period of time in a concentric drive. Usually these operations inflicted some casualties on the partisans, who immediately dispersed into small groups which scattered over wide areas. After the German troops returned to their strongpoints or to the commands from which they had temporarily been withdrawn, the partisans would attempt to re-form their units in the same vicinity. To accomplish this, replacements had to be found, gaps in the cadres had to be filled, morale had to be bolstered, and the reorganized units had to be made combatworthy again. These were not easy tasks. The mission of the Red Air Force in all this was to fly in new leaders, additional cadres for the dispersed units, and supplies to replace what had been lost in battle.

The available evidence indicates clearly the significant role airpower played in the revival of the partisan movement in a number of areas which the Germans thought they had successfully cleared. Thus airborne cadres and reinforcements speedily reorganized the partisan movement near the Polisto Lake following a German operation in the late summer of 1942, and this process was repeated after subsequent German operations in the same area. The extensive use of airpower was instrumental in supporting the speedy revival of the partisan movement in the Bryansk area, following such German operations as "Vogelsang," "Nachbarhilfe," and "Zigeunerbaron." [See Chap. VIII, Sect. III, B, 2.] In the summer and fall of 1943, after the major German operations, "Kugelblitz" and "Maigewitter" in northern Belorussia, the Red Air Force flew in cadres and extended other support to revive the partisan movement there. Similarly, in the area east of Smolensk great efforts were made throughout the second half of 1942 and early 1943 to revitalize a partisan movement which had been overwhelmed by the German antipartisan operation, "Hannover." In this case, the attempt failed.

[See Chap. VII, Sect. V, C, D, and E.

The difference in the outcome of Soviet attempts to reorganize the partisans in areas hit by antipartisan operations lies in the nature of the German operations. In those areas (Bryansk, for instance) where German operations led chiefly to the dispersal of the partisans and where most of the people whom the Germans reported as killed were nonpartisan members of the local population, the task of reorganizing the movement was relatively simple—given time and cadre replacements. However, when the Germans made an effort to distinguish between the partisans

and the population (and the only major example of this was the operation in the Smolensk area) and when, as a result, most of the actual partisans were killed or captured, the infusion of new cadres was not sufficient. In such cases only a mass infusion of men could have produced an effective fighting force, since the problem here was one of replacing rather than reviving the partisan movement. (Thus when one partisan unit in the Caucasus disintegrated, it was virtually replaced by a group originally sent in to reorganize it.) The operations in the Belorussian area mentioned above represent an intermediate stage; there the Germans had concentrated on the real partisans to a greater extent than usual, and the ultimate outcome of the efforts to revive the movement cannot be determined, since the Red Army retook the area not long after these efforts got started.]

§II. Supplies and Reinforcements

A. MILITARY SUPPLIES

1. Invasion to December 1941

Most military supplies obtained by the partisans in 1941 were from local sources such as supply dumps, material left by retreating Red Army units, and weapons abandoned in the areas of the major encirclement battles. Although some weapons were probably sent through gaps in the front, these belonged primarily to men being shipped in to join the partisan groups. A fair estimate would probably be that nine-tenths of the partisans' military supplies in 1941 were obtained from the local sources just mentioned, and that the remaining tenth was flown in.

[The figures estimated here and on the following pages are impressions based on an examination of a mass of documents dealing with the partisan movement, rather than on a compilation of statistical data on air support operations. These estimates

have been made so as to give the reader a concrete idea of the relative significance of various sources of supply. In all cases, a margin of error must be allowed. At the same time, the actual figures are unlikely to have been vastly different. Thus, in the instance referred to, it is possible that instead of one-tenth, as little as 5 per cent or as much as 20 per cent may have been supplied by air; on the other hand, there can be no doubt that a significant quantity was dropped and that it was certainly not as large as one-quarter of the total.]

Air supply operations in 1941 fall into two categories. The most important were the weapons and ammunition carried by the men flown in as partisans; frequently additional supplies for these men were dropped at the same time. In this way the men were provided not only with their immediate needs but also with something of a supply base. The second type was the supplying of weapons and ammunition both to groups which had previously been parachuted in and to other units which had been established earlier in the occupied territory. This type could be of considerable importance; a request for air supplies from a group operating south of Leningrad, for example, stresses the need for explosives, hand grenades, and other supplies. On the whole, however, it is clear from what is known about the over-all partisan conditions in 1941 that the material brought in by air, though useful, was not a significant factor in the supply picture.

2. January-June 1942

The first months of 1942 witnessed a tremendous growth in the partisan movement. It was at this time that large numbers of Red Army stragglers were mobilized into the movement and that many Red Army men were sent through the front to join the partisans. In a period of roughly six months the number of partisans in the occupied area increased from about 30,000 to about

150,000. Obviously the arming of this huge additional force presented a supply problem whose successful solution is one of the most remarkable feats of the whole movement. Although the general problem of supply is beyond the scope of this chapter, the main sources of supplies can be indicated briefly. The following estimates may be suggested tentatively to give some idea of the relative order of magnitude of the various sources. About 50-60 per cent of the additional supplies needed came from the occupied area itself. This included the weapons some of the stragglers still had as well as the small quantities captured from the Germans; most of this "local" material, however, was what the partisans literally picked up on the 1941 battlefields, especially after the snow melted in March and April. About 30 per cent of the additional supplies came from men who were sent in to join the partisan movement. Of this 30 per cent perhaps two-thirds was carried through the front—as around Vitebsk and Kirov—and one-third was flown in. The remaining 10-20 per cent of the additional supplies was delivered to the partisans by the Red Air Force. Thus, of the tremendous quantity of supplies needed for the build-up of the first half of 1942, some 20 to 30 per cent was transported by air. The importance of weapons so transported was probably slightly higher than these percentage figures indicate, because the material flown in was of better quality and contained a higher proportion of automatic weapons. Nevertheless, if the estimates given above are even approximately correct, of the 150,000 partisans active by the late summer of 1942, three-quarters had weapons which came from the occupied area or had been carried through the front, while one-quarter had weapons which had been dropped to them or which they had carried when they themselves were flown in.

[For air supply in the first half of 1942, see, in addition to German sources, A. Fyodorov, *Podpolnyi obkom deistvuyet* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Vooruzhnnykh Sil Soyuza SSR, 1947, Vol. I), p. 111.]

3. Summer 1942—Summer 1944

As we have already seen, the partisan movement had attained a strength of about 150,000 men by the late summer of 1942. During the following year its total strength rose to perhaps a little over 200,000; following the German retreats of the second half of 1943 it probably decreased to slightly over 150,000, its approximate size when, at the end of June 1944, the Soviet summer offensive quickly retook practically all of the formerly occupied areas.

[These figures, of course, disregard changes in the composition of the partisan movement during this period. On the whole, these changes had little effect on the supply problem; weapons were needed regardless of who was in the movement. The major change in composition—the slow replacement of Red Army stragglers by local recruits—probably involved a slight increase in supply requirements for the same number of men, because a larger proportion of Red Army stragglers had brought weapons with them and because the fire discipline of the stragglers was better than than of the local recruits.]

If this great number of men was to continue to have military value, it had to be provided with large quantities of military supplies: weapons, ammunition, explosives and mines.

a. Weapons and Ammunition

The great demand for supplies of weapons and ammunition during this period sprang from several causes. Many of the partisans' original weapons became unserviceable. German antipartisan operations, though generally not inflicting serious casualties on the partisans, often took a heavy toll in equipment: supply dumps were captured, and much equipment was lost as the partisans sought to avoid battle by dispersing in small groups. [On this subject, see especially Chap. VIII, Sect. Ill, B.] Furthermore, the local recruits frequently had no weapons at all. Also,

there was a constant need to replace weapons lost or beyond repair and to replenish ammunition stocks. Finally, the tactical characteristics of partisan warfare in the second and third years of the war in the East put a premium on firepower.

Engagements were short, and the partisans depended on superior firepower to cover their retreat when they were unexpectedly engaged by the Germans, or to inflict heavy casualties when they ambushed the Germans. Likewise, the attacks on rail communications, whose requirements in terms of explosives and mines are discussed below, also reinforced the need for superior firepower. Since the Germans relied primarily on the so-called strongpoint system to protect their lines of communication, the partisans depended upon rapid small arms fire to tie down German strongpoint garrisons while demolition details placed their charges on the rails. All these factors led the partisans to rely heavily on automatic weapons of all sorts—machine pistols, light and heavy machine guns, antitank rifles.

[To a lesser extent, the partisans used light and medium mortars]

Although the partisans had large quantities of these weapons by the summer of 1942, they constantly needed replacements and substitutions for less useful weapons.

It is clear from the available evidence that during this two-year period the Red Air Force transported a steady stream of weapons and ammunition to the partisans. The documentation covers almost all the areas of partisan activity and emphasizes repeatedly the large proportion of automatic weapons flown in.

[See, in addition to German sources, P. Vershigora, *Lyudi s chistoi sovestyu* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1951), p. 191; and V. Andreyev, *Narodnaya voina (zapiski partizana)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izadetelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1952), p. 343.]

During this period, weapons were sent through the front only infrequently and little serviceable equipment was left lying around in the woods. Furthermore, whatever the partisans captured from the Germans or obtained from collaborators who deserted from the Germans was likely to be of poor quality, since the German security troops had notoriously inferior equipment and were deficient in automatic weapons; the equipment of the antipartisan collaborator units was, if possible, even worse. Under these circumstances, the following estimates may not seem unreasonable. Of the weapons and ammunition acquired by the partisans during the two years after the summer of 1942, at least two-thirds was flown in.

[One of the most impressive pieces of evidence supporting the thesis that most of the weapons and ammunition were supplied by air is the collection of partisan questionnaires kept by the 281st Security Division. Partisan prisoners and deserters were asked how their unit supplies were secured; practically all of them indicated that weapons and ammunition came by air while most of the food came from the local population. The period covered was 1943-44. (GMDS, 281 ID 45072.)]

As a result, by the summer of 1944 probably half the total armament of the partisans had been brought in by air or had been carried by personnel flown in.

[It should also be noted that, in this period, some of the larger partisan units were receiving artillery by air, primarily 45 mm and 76 mm guns. (H.Gr. Mitte, Ia, "Bandenlage im Grossraum Rossono," 10 June 1943, GMDS, H.Gr. Mitte 65002/22.)]

b. Explosives and Mines

The summer of 1942 saw the beginning of the "war of the rails." From this time on, partisan attacks on the German-controlled railways were one of the main characteristics of partisan warfare; efforts to disrupt German traffic became the most important partisan military activity and remained so until the Germans retreated from the USSR. To a lesser extent, the partisans also mined the highways which the Germans used to supply their armies. All this activity required vast supplies of explosives and mines. Only to a small extent could these come from local supplies found or captured by the bands; and partisans who came through the front lines, if they managed to carry anything, were usually overburdened with weapons and ammunition. Probably as much as 90 per cent of the explosives and mines, therefore, had to be brought in by plane. This was especially true when the partisans were to carry out a concerted attack on the rail lines in coordination with a Red Army operation. Thus the big attacks of early August 1943 and of 19-20 June 1944 (in the former, 8,600 and in the latter, 9,600 charges were placed on the rails in the area of Army Group Center alone) could not possibly have been carried out without an advance air supply of explosives.

The virtual dependence of the partisans on air supply to carry on their military activities is evident from a number of sources. Available material on individual bands indicates how essential air supply was to their operations.

[G. Linkov, *Voina v tylu vraga* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudo-zhestvennoi Literatury, 1951), pp. 236-37; "Taetigkeits- und Erfahrungsbericht der Banditengruppe Kotschurow," 23 July—9 September 1942 (GMDS, AOK 16, 36588/ 68).]

Several German reports on the last months of 1943 attribute a decline in partisan attacks on the railways to a shortage of explosives; this, in turn, was due to a decrease in air supply brought about by bad weather and by front-line demands on the Red Air Force. The increase in the number of attacks in 1944 was attributed to an increase in air supply.

4. Special Items

In addition to the supplies already mentioned, special items of importance to the military operations of the partisans were transported by the Red Air Force. Of these the most important were radio equipment and batteries, virtually indispensable equipment for maintenance of control and coordination of activity. We have already noted that many partisan leaders who were flown into an area carried radio equipment with them; similarly the radio specialists sent in by air brought along their own. However, it was necessary to keep the partisan bands supplied with both radio equipment and batteries during the entire period of the German occupation. There is evidence that, starting early in 1942, such items were delivered periodically to the partisans by the Red Air Force. In one such shipment, of the eight or ten parachutes dropped, the Germans captured five, which contained among other things, one radio set, thirty batteries, and twenty dry cells. A Stalin order of March 1943 provided that henceforth radio equipment for the partisans was to be sent exclusively by air.

Other items dropped to the partisans were compasses and maps and, in a few instances, spare parts for tanks and sighting equipment for antitank guns. Occasionally spare parts for damaged Soviet planes and gasoline for partisan-operated trucks and tanks were parachuted in; for this latter purpose, a special type of container was devised.

B. FOOD

Securing adequate food supplies was a difficult problem for the partisans throughout the war. Normal production suffered from the war's disruptive effects; heavy German requisitions took

the place of the marketing quotas which had previously been imposed by the Soviet regime; in addition, the soldiers of both armies—and after the initial fighting this meant the Germans—confiscated vast quantities of food for their own use. These conditions were typical of the whole occupied area. The partisans had special difficulties since most of them operated in the Great Russian-Belorussian area, which was normally a food-deficit area. As a consequence, hunger was one of the recurrent problems of virtually all partisan units.

In spite of these difficulties, the partisans were expected to rely on requisitions from the local population for their supplies. The food sent in by air was, on the whole, small in quantity, and in most cases was primarily for purposes of morale (for example, chocolate and vodka). In addition the occasional air supply of such food items as sugar, salt, sausages, and bacon provided a welcome supplement to the inadequate and often monotonously uniform rations of the partisans. [The folder of partisan questionnaires cited in n. 8 is also revealing on the minor role which air supply played in the over-all food supply of the partisans.]

There were, however, two types of situations in which air supply of food was provided on a large scale. The first was when special geographic factors made it impossible for the partisans to obtain food by local requisitioning. The one example of this type which we know about was the Crimea, where the partisans were in mountainous terrain, and the adjacent agricultural areas were farmed by members of a nationality group (the Crimean Tatars) strongly hostile to the Soviet regime and engaged in large-scale collaboration with the Germans. Once German operations had deprived these partisans of their initial and rather lavish supply of food, the 2,000 or so partisans who continued to operate in the Yaila Mountains were in very difficult straits. Hunger and starvation hit hard among them; and instances of cannibalism are recorded in captured Soviet documents. Since the Soviet High Command was obviously interested in maintaining a partisan force in the Crimea, air supply of food—in addition to weapons and ammunition— was resorted to. There is evidence to show that this was continued over a period of at least two years and that the partisans were largely dependent upon these supplies.

[I. Kozlov, *V Krymskom podpolye: vospominaniya* (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel, 1947), pp. 76-77, 79]

The situation in the Crimea has, of course, changed since the Soviet regime chose to punish the Tatars with banishment. The fact that a partisan movement could be maintained under such adverse circumstances is, however, of great significance and shows that the large-scale use of airpower can offset some obstacles to the existence of a partisan movement.

The second type of situation involved a temporary food shortage in a major area of partisan activity. Although there is not enough information to allow generalizations, it seems likely that in any area of relatively low food production (and because of their swampy, mountainous, or heavily forested character, such areas are usually best suited for partisan warfare) there comes a time when the drain on the food supply reaches a point where it is necessary either to reduce drastically the number of partisans or to import considerable quantities of food. This process was undoubtedly hastened by the German practice of combining large-scale looting with almost all antipartisan operations, not only to obtain food for their own needs but to deprive the partisans of it. As the partisans evaded battle, the German troops and the accompanying looting teams were generally able to penetrate areas previously under partisan control and, independent of their success or failure to destroy a substantial proportion of the partisans, were able to drive off large numbers of cattle and remove or destroy great quantities of food. Early in 1943 the Germans also started to use antipartisan operations for large-scale slave-hunting with the (partly intentional) result that many peasants, whose labor in the fields might eventually have benefited the

partisans, were instead carried off as slave labor to Germany. [For some sample statistics, see Chap. VIII, Sect. Ill, B.]

In two major areas of partisan activity the food situation deteriorated to such a low point in 1943. Even in the early part of that year, increasing amounts of food had to be flown to the partisans in the Bryansk area, and by summer large-scale air supply of food was necessary. Since the Soviets retook the area late in the summer of 1943, the long-term effectiveness of these measures cannot be determined. In the second area, around Vitebsk in northern Belorussia, the picture is somewhat clearer. After the German operations "Kugelblitz" and "Maigewitter" in the spring of 1943, a serious food shortage developed. Ponomarenko, the Chief of Staff of the Partisan Movement, visited the area to inspect the bands and, on noting the food shortage, ordered that supplies be flown in to the partisans. The Germans immediately recorded a marked increase in supply flights to the partisans and believed, on the basis of "dependable information," that these flights were primarily for food deliveries. With this help some of the partisans in the area continued to maintain themselves, although the subsequent decline in the size and number of units here probably indicates that the food flown in was not sufficient to sustain the movement at its former strength. Nevertheless, the continuation of partisan activity here shows that the Red Air Force helped sustain this sector of a most important center of partisan warfare.

C. CLOTHING

In general, the partisans were expected to secure clothing in their area of operations. Air supply of clothing was usually restricted to special areas, such as the Crimea [*Ibid* p. 79], or to special items of clothing which were difficult or impossible for the partisans to obtain locally. Probably boots were the most important item of this kind. A prodigious amount of marching, frequently in the most difficult type of terrain, characterized most partisan operations, and, unfortunately for the partisans, good shoes were a consumers' item most difficult to come by in the Soviet Union. To obtain combat boots was thus an especially vexing problem. Various references indicate, however, that those directing the air supply system were aware of this deficiency, and considerable quantities of boots were apparently delivered. Another such critical item was winter clothing. The Grishin Regiment, one of the large roving bands, requested and received air shipments of clothes for the 1942-43 winter. Thus, although the partisans generally had to collect their own, occasional air shipments were no doubt a welcome and highly useful supplement.

§III. Special Aspects of Air Support

A. TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT OF PARTISAN OPERATIONS

In a number of instances, there was sufficient direct coordination between partisan activities and Red Air Force operations that one may accurately speak of tactical air support. Two types of air operations were involved: those giving tactical air support to the partisans by attacking their enemies and those providing the partisans with additional supplies to cope with enemy operations.

Tactically, the Red Air Force could assist in several ways. Occasionally the partisans would radio requests that hostile villages or those presumed to contain German units be bombed. In one instance a plane attacked a German train which had been derailed by the partisans. In March 1943 a Soviet plan was afoot to destroy the Kaminsky Brigade, a collaborator organization which had administrative autonomy in several rayons south of Bryansk; this was to be accomplished by an operation in which defection within the unit, partisan attacks, and a Red Air Force raid were to be combined. The Germans uncovered the plot, and the only part of the plan effected was the air raid.

[See Alexander Dallin, *The Kaminsky Brigade; 1941-1944* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: HRRI), December 1952, Technical Research Report, No. 7, p. 33]

The towns containing the headquarters of German security units in the Bryansk area were repeatedly bombed early in 1943. And in April 1944 special Red Army commandos were dropped to reinforce partisan detachments about to launch an attack on several fortified villages *(Wehrdoerfer)*. No other instances of such operations have been found. Undoubtedly there were more, although it is clear that this kind of cooperation existed only on a small scale and was of little significance to over-all partisan operations. Nevertheless, the Germans appear to have been quite concerned about the possibility of partisan ground attacks on strongpoints—especially at bridges—after the garrison had sought shelter from an air raid.

More frequently, Red Air Force planes attempted to help the partisans when a major German antipartisan operation was underway. By attacking German headquarters, supply routes, and troop columns, the planes were to relieve the pressure on the partisans or enable them to break out of encirclements. Reports on operations of this kind are available for most of the major antipartisan operations and for a few of the smaller ones. Although in one instance as many as 156 planes flew support missions in one night, none of these tactical air operations against antipartisan forces met with any degree of success. Various factors may have been responsible for this failure. In most cases, the number of planes involved was so small that results other than a partisan morale boost could hardly have been expected. When the number of missions increased, certain other factors inherent in the situation lessened the chances of success. German anti-partisan operations usually consisted of concentric attacks on a large partisan-held area. Numerous small German units starting from a wide circle advanced slowly to its center, combing the countryside for partisans and hoping to force them to fight when cornered. The small groups of German soldiers moving through wooded terrain hardly offered promising targets for air attack. There may also have been technical difficulties. Although the partisans were able to communicate with the planes by radio, it is not likely that under the strained circumstances of an antipartisan operation the communication system functioned so smoothly as to allow the coordination of Red Air Force attacks with an attempted partisan breakthrough.

A somewhat different type of tactical support was the air transport of supplies to bands hard pressed by German operations. In such cases, the partisans frequently requested supplies by radio. In October 1943 the Grishin Regiment was in a precarious position because of major German action against it. When the regiment's requests for air supplies were not heeded, an appeal was sent directly to Stalin. "The encirclement has now been on for six days. ... No rations, no ammunition. For ten days we have been asking our superiors for help. None has come. . . . We ask that help be sent us." Thereupon air supply was promised and the Germans noted that supplies were in fact dropped.

[For the intercepted radio messages and other details, see GMDS, AOK 9, 52535/ 13]

A number of similar incidents are reported from such major areas of partisan activity as the Bryansk forest and northern Belorussia. In the case of the latter, air supplies flown in during a major German operation in the Lepel area early in 1944 ran up to a hundred flights a night.

The value of such supplies in a period of crisis was undoubtedly great because of both their tactical use and their morale effect. It is unlikely, however, that they determined the outcome of the operations in which they were used. Although Grishin broke out of his encirclement, the partisans in the Lepel area suffered a serious defeat. Without detailed studies of the tactical situation in each operation, the question of the significance of air supply must be left open.

B. LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY AIR SUPPORT

One possibility explored in the ctmrse of the research on the partisan movement has been that air support imposed certain limitations on the partisans, such as reduced mobility caused by the necessity to stay close to an airfield, the inability to use terrain unsuitable for airfields, and the necessity to detail guards to the airstrips. Although some evidence has been found to support a positive conclusion to this investigation, on the whole the findings are negative. With few exceptions, German antipartisan operations were not successful in clearing out major centers of partisan activity. Therefore, the partisans were able to reassemble in their old operational area and resume use of their old airfields.

[A good example of this is the airfield at Kovali, less than twenty-five miles from the headquarters of the 707th Security Division at Zhukovka.]

Since most of the bands stayed in the same general part of the occupied area, the problem of reduced mobility arose only in exceptional cases. Thus one partisan group trying to escape from a major German operation was delayed by orders directing it to guard an airfield where planes were expected. On another occasion, one of the roving bands enlisted other detachments to help hold a large airfield on a frozen lake where supplies were to be delivered for a raid deep into German-occupied territory.

[Linkov, p. 376.]

There is no evidence that the terrain needed for airfields constituted a problem. In the winter, frozen bodies of water were available as sites. In the summer, those areas which supported extensive partisan activity always provided some dry, flat, open space for landing fields or contained open bodies of water which accommodated flying boats.

It is clear that the airfields had to be guarded, but providing guards apparently presented no great difficulty. Because the fields were usually located near the headquarters of a brigade or other partisan unit of considerable size, the task of guarding the field frequently was assigned to the headquarters detachment, which included the men guarding the unit staff. In some cases a platoon or company was assigned to guard the airfield, either permanently or on a rotating basis.

[For examples, see, in addition to German sources, Fyodorov, p. 466; Vershigora, p. 176.]

Drop-areas were apparently guarded in the same manner. Considering the size of the partisan groups involved, in all cases where we know that guard details were assigned, the drain on manpower was apparently insignificant.

One other aspect of limitations imposed by air support was the possi-sibility that partisan groups might have become "spoiled" if they received supplies by air and did not have to collect them on their own. The instances of such "softness" were undoubtedly rare. One is given in the diary of a woman partisan and a second one is indicated by an order of the Kovpak Regiment cautioning its members to capture weapons and collect combat supplies by all possible means, and not to wait for supplies from Moscow.

[HSSPF Ost, "Bericht ueber die Bekaempfung der Kolpak-Bande," 2 September 1943, p. 7 (GMDS, EAP 170-a-10/5).]

Such isolated instances were of no significance for the movement as a whole.

C. GERMAN EFFORTS TO COUNTER AIR SUPPORT

1. Interception of Planes

The most obvious way to cope with air support of the partisans would have been to intercept Soviet planes. The Germans recognized the importance of airpower in building up the partisan movement only after the movement had already attained dangerous proportions. Thus it was not until 1942 and 1943 that they began to stress the need for interdicting Soviet air support. One of the most incisive reports on the need for such interference stated:

According to the observations of the 221st Security Division, the partisans receive weapons and ammunition as well as officers and commissars by planes. Recent observations have led to the conclusion that newly organized bands are led by officers and commissars brought in by plane, rather than by those recruited from the local population. Because the forces available to the security division are very weak, the bands cannot be destroyed at this time. In order to decrease the strength and combatworthiness of the bands, or to prevent the formation of new ones, it is most important that the air traffic be interrupted.

[Gem.Flakabteilung 303 (v), Flakuntergruppe Gomel, la, "Einsatz von Nachtjae-gern," 17 June 1942, p. 1 (GMDS, 221 ID 36509/5, Anlage 316).]

Occasionally Soviet planes on partisan support missions were shot down, but on the whole the Germans were unable to interdict partisan air support. The factors responsible for this were presented above in the introduction.

2. Efforts to Trap Soviet Planes

Unable to intercept partisan support planes in the air, the Germans began in the summer of 1942 to set up fake landing fields. They imitated the recognition symbols used by the partisans to communicate with Soviet planes in an effort to get the planes to land on fields under their control. Elaborate efforts were made; the directives ordering the establishment of the fake airfields generally were prefaced with remarks to the effect that such airfields had been successful elsewhere. The available evidence indicates, however, that such favorable results were rarely achieved. Only three instances of successful deception have been found. The most successful of these took place in late May 1942 in the area east of Smolensk. In a period of a few days, seven Soviet planes were captured or destroyed in this manner. In the summer of 1942 in the Bryansk area two planes were trapped. On one occasion the Germans held a partisan airfield in the northern Ukraine and took from a Soviet plane which landed on it one of their most valuable partisan prisoners, Captain Ruzanov, an adjutant of Strokach, Chief of Staff of the Ukranian Partisan Movement. The Germans had to use one of two methods in most of their efforts to trap these planes. First, they flew their own reconnaissance planes in the evenings to determine the signs being used that night by partisan groups in the area, and then transmitted this information for use at the fake airfield. Secondly, they attempted to capture a partisan airfield in the hope that Soviet planes would continue to land there.

3. Fake Drop-Areas

The complement to fake airfields were fake drop-areas. Simultaneously with the construction of such fields, the Germans also instituted the use of partisan flare and fire signs to induce Soviet planes to drop supply containers on German-held areas. In the same period during which the Germans were able to trap seven planes in the Smolensk area, they also succeeded in getting

Soviet planes to drop over sixty supply containers. Similar efforts in the same area at a later date were apparently not so successful. In the Bryansk area, the Germans also had mild success.

During the antipartisan operation "Zigeunerbaron," a German regiment obtained supplies from the Soviets four nights in a row; the fifth night bombs were dropped instead. In another operation the Germans received supply drops twice.

Like the efforts to trap planes on fake airfields, German attempts to divert supply drops to their own areas were relatively ineffective.

[One method the Soviets used to dampen German enthusiasm for taking supply containers destined for the partisans was to parachute bombs looking like supply containers and timed to go off shortly after landing. (203. Sich. Div., Ia, "Divisionsbefehl Nr. 55," 24 August 1942, p. 3, GMDS, 203 ID 29186/2, Anlage 74.)]

German failure to capitalize on the frequent mistakes made by the Soviets in dropping both personnel and materials was undoubtedly due to a lack of specialists and equipment rather than to an absence of promising opportunities.

4. Bombing Airfields

Since they were unable to drive the partisans permanently out of their areas of concentration, the Germans tried to interrupt their air supply system by bombing partisan airfields rather than trying to capture and hold them. A number of such bombing incidents are recorded. In one case, a small group of reconnaissance planes, which were regularly engaged in antipartisan operations, repeatedly bombed partisan airfields, once destroying two planes on the ground. In another case German bombers destroyed a partisan landing area on a frozen lake by dropping enough explosive to crack the ice.

[Vershigora, pp. 202-3; S. A. Kovpak, *Ot Putivlya do Karpat* (Moscow: Gosudar-stvennoye Izdatelstvo Detskoi Literatury Narkomprosa RSFSR, 1945), pp. 105-6.]

Another German tactic was to drop bombs which would explode either on touching or on concussion of any kind within thirty days. Other bombing efforts were made—not always successfully, for at least one case is recorded where such bombing did not interfere with the continued use of the field by the partisans. The Germans lacked the large number of planes needed to scout the partisan airfields and to bomb them regularly. In any case, it is doubtful if the majority of these fields were rewarding targets, since they had neither permanent runways nor elaborate structures. A suggestion that the German Air Force drop defective weapons and bombs to the partisans from captured Soviet planes was never followed up.

5. The Spotting System

One basic problem of all German efforts to cope with Soviet air support was the development of an efficient spotting system. Without such a system, they were, in effect, ignorant of who or what was entering and leaving areas supposedly under German control; they also did not know the location of airfields and the volume of supplies the partisans received through them. It is understandable, therefore, that the Germans made great efforts and elaborate plans for reporting planes, parachutists, flares, and fire signals. The statistical information on air support which was gathered by such sources and has been utilized in this study shows that the spotting system was obviously of some benefit. Nevertheless, perennial German complaints about units failing to carry out their spotting duties— to say nothing of the fact that partisan control over large areas

prevented the Germans from covering all the occupied territory—show that the system never functioned in a really satisfactory manner.

In conclusion, one may say that German efforts to cope with partisan air support began rather late and, though not lacking in ingenuity, were never conducted on a scale commensurate with the problem. On the whole, partisan air support reached those for whom it was destined; if it did not, the fault seldom lay with the Germans.

§IV. Airpower in Antipartisan Warfare

The potential value of airpower in German antipartisan warfare was great. Its most obvious use in this connection—the interdiction of partisan air support—has already been alluded to; in addition, the possibilities for the Germans to observe and attack partisan units through airpower were almost unlimited. An occupying power with sufficient planes and an effective warning system to intercept partisan support planes would have had an easier time fighting the partisans than the Germans did. If, in addition, its air resources would permit the continuous harassing of partisan units, the very existence of bands could be made most difficult. Partisan formations are very sensitive to air attack. If this fact could become apparent even when air operations were limited drastically by the meager German resources, the real potential of airpower in antipartisan warfare must be considerable.

By the end of 1941 the German commanders in the East began to recognize that air strength would be invaluable in fighting the partisans, but the situation at the front made the assignment of planes to antipartisan warfare impossible at that time. Not until the spring of 1942 were planes systematically sent on missions against the partisans. By that time, the partisan movement had grown to such an extent that the Germans had tremendous difficulty coping with it, especially in view of their inadequate security forces. Under these circumstances, airpower in antipartisan warfare became primarily a matter of assigning planes in small groups or individually to support specific antipartisan operations, or to attack known partisan concentrations when planes were available but there were not enough security troops for offensive action. It must be kept in mind that the numerical inferiority of German planes obtained on the Eastern front during the whole period of antipartisan operations. This inferiority imposed rigid limitations on both the number and type of German planes used. Reliance was placed primarily on small reconnaissance planes, various obsolete trainer and bomber models, and medium bombers temporarily detailed to antipartisan missions.

A. RECONNAISSANCE

To understand the importance of aerial reconnaissance in antipartisan warfare, one must first examine the problems faced by the German security forces. German headquarters and support units were stationed in the larger towns and by their very presence generally acted as a deterrent to partisan activity in the vicinity. Security forces were generally located in garrisons in the smaller towns, with strongpoints in the villages and at strategic points along the main lines of communications. In the vast areas between garrisons and at any distance from the main roads and railways, especially in the occupied parts of Belorussia and the RSFSR, there were usually no German troops and few informants. In these areas the partisans organized their units and established their camps, moving up against communication lines only to carry out raids. Periodically the Germans captured prisoners and secured information from them, but it was difficult to send reconnaissance patrols into this area because of the danger of ambushes. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that, as soon as they realized the seriousness of the situation, toward the end of 1941 and at the beginning of 1942, the German commanders with responsibility for security in the rear areas demanded that the German Air Force fly

reconnaissance missions. And early in 1942 when the major German antipartisan operations began, similar requests were issued. In such operations the German units, penetrating territory unknown to them and fighting an enemy who alternately evaded combat and struck from some unexpected direction, apparently felt lost. Their appeals for air support in the form of reconnaissance missions were understood and heeded: starting with an operation in the Bobruisk area in March 1942, air reconnaissance became a standard feature of major antipartisan operations.

From the very beginning German experience reports on the use of planes for reconnaissance purposes are uniformly favorable. Their concluding reports on virtually every large-scale antipartisan operation include a section in which the value of reconnaissance missions is stressed.

[Examples will be found in Chap. VII, Sect. Ill, B, 2, and V, A, 3. The Germans soon discovered, however, that, unless there had been frequent flights over a given partisan-held area, any sudden appearance of reconnaissance planes before an anti- partisan operation was a "tip-off" for the partisans. Three methods of dealing with this problem were devised. Sometimes no planes were permitted to fly over the area until the attack had actually started. Secondly, whenever possible, reconnaissance flights were flown with such frequency over all areas that the partisans would notice no change when a major attack was about to be launched. Thirdly, reconnaissance missions were incorporated into the regular flight pattern or were sent over the area in straight flight in the hope that their real purpose would not be recognized.]

What success these operations had was often due in large measure to this type of air support, a conclusion which is not surprising considering the ease with which the partisans collected information about the Germans, and the difficulties the Germans had securing information on the partisans. The value of this type of air support grew as the partisans gained control of larger regions and the Germans were increasingly limited to the areas near the railway lines. German experiences in the use of air-power in reconnaissance missions are best described in a report by the security division which was responsible for security in the area from the western part of the Bryansk forests to the Dnepr.

For some time the division has had at its disposal from the Tactical Reconnaissance Group 11./12 a reconnaissance flight [3 planes] of the Focke Wulf 189 type for employment in antipartisan warfare.

[The Focke Wulf 189 was a twin-fuselage fighter-bomber often used as a reconnaissance plane which carried four 100-pound bombs and two machine guns, as well as cameras]

The division has had such excellent experiences with the employment of these planes that it suggests to higher headquarters that it request the permanent assignment of such reconnaissance nights to the security divisions for the following reasons: 1. Reconnaissance

Considering the large size of each security [division] area and the resulting incomplete coverage in guarding the area by strong points and informants, keeping the entire area under constant supervision (by ground troops) is impossible. Only through the continual employment of reconnaissance planes is it possible to carry out constant reconnaissance of the *whole area* and to obtain an accurate enemy situation report, especially for areas temporarily not accessible to the troops. Examples :

Partisan airfields south of Novozybkov and Propoisk.
Partisan camps in the forests southwest of Belinkovichi.
The appearance of partisans south of Novozybkov.

In addition there is the factor of *speed;* reconnaissance can be initiated in a few minutes and the findings reach the troop commanders with equal speed (ground-airplane radio communications, message drops). In partisan warfare especially, because the enemy situation changes constantly, such timely and speedy reconnaissance acquires great significance. [Antipartisan] operations undertaken after time-consuming ground reconnaissance and reports by informants and other inhabitants frequently fail because the enemy situation has undergone basic changes in the meantime.

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Einsatz bewaffneter Luftaufklaerung," 21 June 1943, p. 1 (GMDS, 221 ID 36509/5, Anlage 312).]

Five months later the same division reported on its experiences with these reconnaissance planes in an equally enthusiastic tone. The other security divisions were not assigned such groups of planes because of Air Force shortages. The reports from these divisions indicate, however, that whenever reconnaissance missions were flown in their areas, the results were similarly impressive.

B. COMMUNICATION

The Germans also used airpower in antipartisan warfare to provide communication between various units as well as between headquarters and subordinate units. As German formations converged on a partisan stronghold, the problem of communication became extremely difficult, and light reconnaissance planes which could carry messages and liaison officers offered extremely valuable services. A German unit isolated in partisan-held territory could be reached by plane when radio communications failed or were jammed by the partisans.

This use of airpower was of particular value to the Germans because it eased one of the most serious operational problems they faced in combating the partisans.[See Chap. VII, Sect. Ill, B, 2.]

C. SUPPLY

The ability to send supplies by air to isolated garrisons and mobile striking forces could have been of great value to the Germans. Their small security forces, the difficult terrain, and the lack of roads obstructed efforts to move supplies overland. These difficulties enhanced the value of airpower, and there is no doubt that a far more effective antipartisan campaign could have been conducted if the Germans had had more planes. This shortage made it impossible for them to capitalize on the potential use of airpower and thus imposed severe limitations on their operations. Although the German Air Force apparently realized the need to provide supplies for isolated units operating in the difficult terrain at considerable distance from their base, the number of recorded successful air supply operations is very small. One German strongpoint, surrounded by hostile forces and evidently beyond the range of supply convoys from other strongpoints, was supplied with nine containers of weapons and ammunition by planes which flew three different missions. In one of the largest antipartisan operations in Belorussia, isolated German units were supplied by air with food and ammunition. No doubt there were other instances of this sort, but on the whole the German lack of planes frustrated such attempts.

D. BOMBING AND STRAFING IN ANTIPARTISAN OPERATIONS

With the exception of reconnaissance, missions to bomb and strafe partisan installations were more frequent than any other type of air support operation.

[General missions flown to harass the partisans are discussed below; only missions in direct support of specific antipartisan operations are discussed here.]

Starting in the spring of 1942 with the first major antipartisan operations, German Air Force planes flew tactical support missions for practically all such operations until the summer of 1944. Although there were variations, the number of planes involved usually ranged from three to fifteen, and each plane generally flew several missions. For the most part, the reports on these missions are favorable.

[For examples, see Kozlov, p. 238; also this book, Chap. VII, Sect. Ill, B, 2 and V, A, 3.]

Bombing was of particular value in those areas where the partisans had prepared heavy field fortifications which severely handicapped German security troops, often deficient in heavy weapons. Strafing proved to be especially effective against partisans attempting to escape encirclement or crossing rivers and open areas. Although the German reports do not stress the point, it is clear that air support gave a morale boost to the German troops—often over-age and otherwise second-rate units who were engaged in a type of fighting which tended to be particularly demoralizing and which frequently found them outclassed in military equipment.

[There are few useful statistics on antipartisan air missions flown by the German Air Force. The only series of figures which gives some idea of the German effort is for 1943 in the area of Army Group North, which covered the territory between the Gulf of Finland and the Velikiye Luki-Rositten Railway. No missions were flown in January, February, March, and April. Thereafter the figures are: May—9; June—38; July—4; August—55; September—71; October—610; November—251; December— 82. The autumn peak is related to several major antipartisan operations conducted at that time. (HGr Nord, la, *Der Feldzug gegen die Sowjet-Union der Heeresgruppe Nord, Kriegsjahr 1943,* 24 December 1944, GMDS, Lib. 2441.)]

Conversely, the most important effect German air support had on the partisans appears to have been on their morale rather than on their material strength. The partisans were extremely sensitive to air raids, and usually attempted to move, often in panic, as soon as an attack started. Numerous reports stress that morale was badly shaken and that panic spread even when material damage was slight. One of the Soviet memoirs admits as much. The commissar of a crack partisan unit, the Kovpak Regiment, mentioned to another high-ranking partisan officer that the physical damage of air attacks on his unit had been minor, but that the effects on morale had been serious.

[Vershigora, p. 448.]

There is evidence, however, that some of the well-trained troops flown in to strengthen the partisans, as well as some of the more experienced units, were less affected by air attacks.

[The explanation for sensitivity of partisan units to air attacks probably lies in their basically irregular character, their lower discipline, and their limited experience with air attacks. Since the turnover in membership was rather high, these factors did not lose their importance as rapidly as they might have been expected to.]

There were certain problems in tactical air support which the Germans never solved entirely. Coordination of air action with the advance of ground troops proved to be extremely difficult;

occasionally German planes bombed villages occupied by their own troops or already cleared of partisans. Air-ground communication and recognition presented especially knotty problems because of the terrain and the poor equipment of the security troops. [See Chap. VII, Sect. V, A, 3.] The control of the planes by air force headquarters, which received requests for support from the German security units through various higher army headquarters, sometimes proved difficult. After considerable experience, the Germans discovered that the best way to cope with such problems was to assign small groups of planes (usually obsolescent models and liaison planes) to units with territorial security tasks. Such planes flew on the orders of these units and supported their day-to-day activities and minor operations. In large operations, special air force liasion officers were assigned to the headquarters of the German units in order to direct such other formations as had been made available for the operation. [See Chap. VII, Sect. Ill, B, 2.]

The potential of tactical air support for antipartisan operations is well shown by the 221st Security Division report quoted above:

During [antipartisan] operations the employment of armed reconnaissance planes offers special advantages. Enemy units which have been surrounded and are hiding in trackless swamps can be attacked with bombs and machine guns. Enemy preparations inside a pocket for mass break-outs can be discovered [so that] reserves can be moved in time to the spot selected for the break-out. Enemy units which succeed in breaking out can be pursued and scattered, and heavy casualties [can be inflicted].

[221. Sich.Div., Ic, "Einsatz bewaffneter Luftaufklaerung," 21 June 1943, p. 2 (GMDS, 221 ID 36509/5, Anlage 312).]

Only a lack of planes prevented the Germans from using airpower more extensively to support their attacks on partisan centers. It is at least possible that with substantial air support these operations would not have failed as frequently as they did.

E. BOMBING AND STRAFING PARTISAN-HELD AREAS

In addition to supporting specific antipartisan operations, German planes also raided territory on missions which were a cross between nuisance attacks and strategic bombing. All villages in partisan-controlled areas were attacked; partisan camps and installations discovered by aerial reconnaissance were bombed and strafed; and an effort was made to spread confusion and destruction in the territory controlled by the partisans. Though such attacks occurred occasionally in 1942, the main efforts were directed against certain large areas which came under partisan control in 1943 and 1944. In Belorussia particularly, there were large partisan-

held areas which the Germans did not enter for months and sometimes years; it was on these that German air raids concentrated. Bombs were dropped by planes whose crews acquired their bombardier training in this manner. There is no doubt that these attacks took their toll on the morale of the population; their effect on the partisans is problematical. While hits were scored on some partisan encampments and in a few instances ammunition dumps were exploded, on the whole it is doubtful if these attacks had the effect the Germans imagined. Manpower was not a major partisan problem at this time, and what casualties were inflicted could always be replaced. Supplies were less plentiful, but since the dumps were usually small, little could be lost in any one attack. If the attacks had deleterious effects on partisan morale, as was the case in air attacks coincident with antipartisan operations, this type of warfare provided time to repair the damage. It appears that the partisans eventually got used to the attacks. On the other hand, it must be

borne in mind that this was often the only method the Germans had of attacking partisan units in these areas and of controlling their strength and effectiveness; certainly it was more effective than no interference at all. It might be concluded that although attacks on partisan-held areas have a nuisance value and, in individual instances, will inflict serious damage, decisive results can be attained only by employing far greater forces than those which were available to the Germans. [Information on such operations will be found in Chap. VII, Sect. Ill, B, 2.]

F. DISTRIBUTION OF LEAFLETS

Airpower's importance in spreading written propaganda to the partisans and the population in partisan-held areas is obvious. Dropping leaflets from planes was sometimes the only way the Germans could conduct psychological warfare operations against the bands. Even in areas not under partisan control, the sparsity of German security forces often made air distribution of propaganda materials the alternative to no distribution at all. A discussion of the contents and effectiveness of such materials is outside the scope of this study, which finds of interest, however, the German opinion that because these leaflets were dropped by plane, their effectiveness was enhanced.

G. FLY-OVER EFFECT OF AIRPOWER

The material already cited on the effects of air attacks on partisan morale leads to the assumption that the fly-over effect of planes must have been considerable. It is clear that the appearance of German planes made the Bands uneasy and often induced them to change their location, in the belief that a German attack was imminent. The only definite evidence on this subject, however, concerns the effect of German planes on the population, and the role they played in impressing the people with the continuing power of the Germans.

H. PARTISAN EFFORTS TO COUNTER GERMAN AIR OPERATIONS

The partisans quickly learned to camouflage their encampments so that they were difficult to identify from the air. As the bands became more accustomed to air attacks, the frequency and accuracy of their antiaircraft fire increased. Massed small-arms fire was responsible for the shooting down of several planes in 1942 and in each of the following years; in 1943 in one operation alone four planes were destroyed in this manner. Antiaircraft guns of 20 mm caliber were also used. The effectiveness of partisan fire was probably due to the fact that in most cases the Germans depended largely on slow, obsolescent planes for antipartisan operations. The poor planes plus the increasingly heavy antiaircraft fire probably forced the Germans to guard their planes more carefully than would generally be necessary in a situation where planes attack troops without air cover.

[It is interesting to note that in the last year of the war the partisans began the establishment of a spotter system in the large areas under their control.]

On the whole, however, partisan countermeasures did not impede the air invader's operations sufficiently to make German ground and air commanders deem it unprofitable.

I. THE POTENTIAL OF AIRPOWER IN ANTIPARTISAN WARFARE

It has been noted that the Germans were never able to employ airpower extensively in their fight against the partisans. It may be of value, therefore, to indicate some of its potential uses, which are not always apparent from an account of German experiences. The importance of interdicting enemy (in this case, Soviet) air support cannot be stressed too much. In the initial stages of a

partisan movement, such interference strikes at the most important component of the movement—the cadres without which it would fall apart. Any substantial cut in the number of cadres would prevent the bands from expanding to the extent they did while opposing the Germans. Interdiction in the later stages would reduce the partisans to military impotence if their stores were simultaneously subjected to air attack. Furthermore, the loss of a high percentage of the planes engaged in partisan-support missions might well lead to the abandonment of such operations; the extremely low ratio of losses in World War II can undoubtedly be attributed to the willingness of the Soviet High Command to commit as many planes as it did in support of the partisans.

Once a partisan movement of some size is in existence an adequate number of planes can produce certain important accomplishments. The whole concept of the large roving band would then become obsolete. Such bands can operate only in areas in which the occupying power has virtually no planes, since partisan bands moving long distances must stay reasonably close together and cannot avoid crossing open territory from time to time. Under such circumstances—and even more obviously if they are forced to move through open country—these bands could be completely destroyed by strafing, by bombs, or by rockets fired from planes.

An occupying power, faced with a partisan problem and without substantial forces to pacify its rear areas can significantly reduce the partisan threat, if planes of the type used in the later stages of World War II for ground-support operations are available in numbers sufficient to keep up sustained air attacks on the partisans. If there are not enough planes to interdict air supply and to carry out continuous nuisance raids over the entire rear area, such a procedure should be applied to one sector at a time. In those few instances in which the Germans thoroughly crushed the partisan movement in one area, they found that the Soviet High Command could not revive it in spite of concentrated efforts. [E.g., see Chap. VII, Sect. V, C, D, and E.] It seems wiser, therefore, to concentrate limited air resources on one area at a time and clear it thoroughly, rather than to disperse them thinly over a vast territory with the result that the partisans are not crushed anywhere and the population, seeing the ineffectiveness of the antipartisan measures, increasingly turns to the partisans.

It is clear from the available evidence that air operations against the partisans affect their morale negatively. It must be kept in mind, however, that unless ground forces exploit this weakened situation *immediately,* partisan cadres can re-establish firm discipline and control. The only other way to take advantage of this situation is to assure the partisans by words and deeds that deserters and prisoners will be treated decently. By contrast, when the German planes turned back, it did not take long for the partisans to recall that they would almost certainly be shot if they fell into enemy hands.

It should be apparent that airpower can play a significant and even decisive role in antipartisan warfare, providing its importance is recognized early and its employment is on a scale commensurate with the dangers to be faced.

PART II Case Studies

CHAPTER VII The Yelnya-Dorogobuzh Area of Smolensk Oblast

Gerhard L. Weinberg

Introduction

Two reasons prompted the selection of the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area, which lies in the west-central part of the European USSR near Smolensk, for detailed treatment. This area saw the first appearance of a large-scale partisan movement powerful enough to hold a substantial slice of territory (2,000-3,000 square miles) behind the German front, and it comprises the first, and probably the only, instance in which the Germans crushed a partisan movement of such size. A study of this area may give some insight into the factors which affected the development, organization, control, and operations of the partisan movement in the first year of the war in the East (summer of 1941 to summer of 1942). Likewise, such a study may furnish some clues as to the factors which caused the destruction of the movement—factors which were, in turn, integrally connected with the movement's nature and structure.

The German documents have provided a considerable amount of evidence on developments in this area. This material has been exploited not only to present a full picture and analysis of the partisan movement here, but also to offer possibilities for comparison with other case studies.

At the end of July 1941, German forces advancing on the central part of the Eastern front took Smolensk and entered the western part of the Yelnyra-Dorogobuzh area. The front remained fairly stationary until the beginning of October when the Germans launched a major offensive in the direction of Moscow. In the initial stages of this offensive, a large number of Soviet units were surrounded in the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area (the so-called Vyazma pocket), and efforts were made by the Germans to round them up. While these efforts were in progress, the bulk of the German forces moved on eastward.

The turning of the tide before Moscow at the beginning of December

1941 was followed by a Soviet breakthrough. In the second half of January

1942 the spearhead of the Soviet counteroffensive reached into the Yelnya-Dorogobuzh area in an attempt to cut the Smolensk-Vyazma road and railway, the main German supply route in the area. Though supported by large-scale drops of airborne units, the Soviet effort was thwarted and parts of the spearhead were cut off from the main body of the Red Army when the Germans closed the gap in their line.

The regular and airborne units thus trapped in the area were joined by a large partisan movement which was then being formed. Because the first German efforts to clear out this area were unsuccessful, there was time for the partisan and regular units to consolidate their position. This forced the Germans to stage a major operation. In the two weeks at the end of May and the beginning of June 1942, all or parts of nine German divisions mounted an attack which shattered the partisan movement in the area.

["To a question by the President regarding guerrilla operations, Mr. Molotov replied that the partisans were most active in the Moscow-Smolensk-Mozhaisk (Dorogobuzh) sector. They numbered 9,000 irregulars and parts of 2-3 cavalry divisions under General Belov. They were in absolute control of an egg-shaped area measuring some 60 kilometers east and west by 20-30 kilometers north and south. They were, however, less conspicuous in other areas." [Memorandum of conversation among Roosevelt, Molotov, and others on 30 May 1942, quoted by Robert E. Sherwood in *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History* (New York: Harpers, 1948), p. 567.]]

The attack was then followed by extensive mopping-up operations.

From the middle of June 1942 to March 1943 the area, on the whole, was free of partisan activity. A German withdrawal in March 1943, designed to shorten the front of Army Group Center, resulted in the re-occupation of the eastern part of the area by regular Soviet forces, while the rest of the area was retaken by the Red Army in the course of the great German retreats of August and September 1943.

Partisan Warfare

Preparations for the formation of partisan units had been made by the Soviet High Command before the German forces reached the area, and the first efforts to activate partisan groups were made in August and September 1941, at a time when the front ran temporarily through the westernmost part of the area. These efforts were confined largely to bringing in groups of men through the front and by air to organize many small partisan groups which might later be of service to the Red Army. The German offensive of October burst into these beginnings, temporarily disrupted them, but at the same time unintentionally provided them with the human material out of which a large-scale partisan movement could eventually be formed. A great number of Red Army stragglers went into hiding in the area, and German efforts to round them up were largely unsuccessful. Lacking the necessary time and enthusiasm to do a thorough job of combing through the area, the German units generally brought out only those men who were willing to become prisoners of war, and many of these escaped after brief encounters with the German methods of treating prisoners. At the same time, many of the lower-level Party, State, and NKVD functionaries had also gone into hiding in the area, thus providing the nuclei for the small partisan groups which existed in the last three months of 1941.

The partisan movement grew tremendously in the two and a half months between the middle of January and the end of March 1942, expanding from small groups of five to thirty men to large and well-organized formations totaling close to 10,000 in all. How was this accomplished? The basis of expansion was provided by the large number of Red Army stragglers left behind from the 1941 battles. Most of them had settled in the villages; a few may have been marauding in small groups. These men were rapidly mobilized by organizers of two main categories : those on the spot and those brought in. The men on the spot were the Party, State, and NKVD functionaries mentioned above. Many of them already had small groups of followers, and with these to lend support to their commands, they proceeded to call up the able-bodied men—meaning generally the Red Army stragglers—for service as partisans. As their units grew in size, the organizers rose in rank and position; the original group of followers often became the first company of a battalion and, later, of a regiment. Thus a successful organizer might rise from the equivalent of a squad leader to that of a regimental commander in a few months; the rank and file, however, appear to have had few prospects for advancement beyond the position of squad leader. The organizers who were brought in, usually by air, but occasionally through the front, either joined the staffs of the growing units set up by the men on the spot, or began forming units of their own.

The available accounts of this mass mobilization indicate that primary emphasis was placed on the redrafting of Red Army stragglers. A large proportion joined without much objection, but some apparently went along only under the threat of force. Recruitment among those who had lived in the area before the war was more difficult, and except for a few people who had a stake in the Soviet system, men could be induced to join only by threats. Because the regular units which had been cut off by the Germans had suffered heavy casualties, some of the men drafted at the beginning of 1942 were enrolled as replacements for these units rather than as recruits for the partisan detachments.

What were the partisan units like? Certain characteristics are very clear. Probably about 75 per cent of their members were former Red Army men who had either evaded the German mopping-up operations of 1941 or had escaped from prisoner-of-war camps. The units were organized along military lines—the formal system of squads, platoons, companies, battalions, and regiments frequently bdng imposed on units with little organic cohesion. The widest variation appears to have been in the number of battalions per regiment, which ranged from three to seven. This may be the only surviving indication that the accidents of war and the qualities of the individual commander played a great role in determining the size of partisan units in the first year of the war. At one time, probably at the beginning of April, two partisan divisions, one consisting of three and the other of five regiments, were formed. However, the most important operational command appears always to have been the regiment.

As previously stated, the partisan units were recruited for the most part from Red Army stragglers. As the supply of Red Army men was exhausted, recruitment turned more to members of the local population, with special emphasis apparently being placed on re-examining those who had escaped military service for medical reasons. In view of the fact that the local population in this area is overwhelmingly of Great Russian nationality, it may be assumed that the local recruits were Great Russians. What evidence is available on the subject indicates that this was also true of the vast majority of the Red Army men. The age distribution reflected the predominance of Red Army stragglers; the heaviest concentration was in the group from eighteen to thirty. Most of the cadres seem to have been from the lower strata of the governing apparatus. The political background of the members is more difficult to ascertain. The scanty evidence indicates that the percenage of Communist Party members was slightly higher than in the Red Army after the mobilization of 1941. Training did not present much of a problem because most of the partisans had had some sort of previous military training. Ten-day courses were evidently considered sufficient to acquaint the others with the rudiments of infantry warfare.

Control within the partisan units was threefold. There were military officers at all levels, from the squad up. There were political officers, apparently from the company level up. There were Special Sections of the NKVD at the regimental level and in some cases at the battalion level. This triple control system was at times confused by the fact that many of those holding military positions were former NKVD or Party officials, while the political officers frequently were in charge of military assignments. Furthermore, there appear to have been some cases in which the positions of commander and commissar or commissar and NKVD representative were held by one person. The power held by the military and political officers over the men was very great indeed, and there are indications that at times this power was seriously abused.